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CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICS, ḤADĪTH LITERATURE, AND THE ARTICULATION OF SUNNĪ ISLAM

*The Legacy of the Generation of Ibn Saʿd,
Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal*

BY

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PREFACE

This book is a slightly revised version of my doctoral dissertation "The Arts of *Ḥadīth* Compilation and Criticism: A study of the emergence of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century" that I wrote at the University of Chicago under the guidance of Professor Wadad al-Qadi. Professor Qadi first introduced me to Ibn Sa'd, whose *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is largely responsible for my understanding of the development of early Islam, many years ago and she has remained most supportive of my research ever since. I am particularly grateful for her decision to include *Constructive Critics* in the Islamic History and Civilization series at Brill. I also received useful comments from Professors Fred Donner and Robert Dankoff of the University of Chicago during the dissertation phase of this book. Finally, I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer whose erudite seven-page report on this manuscript saved me from several potentially embarrassing overgeneralizations and provided references to additional secondary literature that I had neglected to cite.

Much of the research and writing of this book was made possible by a generous dissertation fellowship from the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation during the 2001–2002 academic year. The conversion of this dissertation into a book manuscript was completed during a fruitful year at Mount Holyoke College (2002–2003), and I am grateful for the opportunity extended to me to serve as a Visiting Assistant Professor in Islam by the Department of Religion.

My parents, Hank and Ellen Lucas, have been champions of education my whole life and, in many ways, have inspired me to follow in their footsteps as a professor and teacher. I am particularly thankful for their love, support, and an introductory lesson in database construction. My brother Jon has provided much appreciated encouragement. This book is dedicated to my wife Maha Nassar, who, more than anyone else, has encouraged me to think seriously about Sunnī Islam and to undertake research that is intended to be of value to academics and inquisitive Muslims alike.

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> , London, 1917–.
<i>EI2</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , New Edition, Leiden, 1960–2002.
<i>al-Fihrist</i>	Ibn al-Nadīm, <i>Kitāb al-fihrist li-l-Nadīm</i> , ed. Reza Tajaddod, Tehran, no date.
<i>GAS</i>	Fuat Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i> , I, 1967.
<i>IJMES</i>	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i> , New York, 1970–.
<i>al-Iṣāba</i>	Ibn Ḥajar, <i>al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣahāba</i> , Beirut, 1978.
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> , New Haven, 1842–.
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i> , Jerusalem, 1979–.
<i>Siyar</i>	al-Dhahabī, <i>Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'</i> , Beirut, 1984.
<i>Succession</i>	Wilferd Madelung, <i>The Succession to Muḥammad</i> , Cambridge, 1997.
<i>Tadhkira</i>	al-Dhahabī, <i>Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz</i> , Beirut, 1998.
<i>Taqdima</i>	Ibn Abī Ḥātim, <i>Taqdimat al-ma'rifa</i> , Hyderabad, 1952.
<i>Taqrib</i>	Ibn Ḥajar, <i>Taqrib al-tahdhīb</i> , Beirut, 1996.
<i>TK 2001</i>	Ibn Sa'd, <i>Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr</i> , ed. 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar, Cairo, 2001.
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i> , 1847–.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I.1

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate the critical role played by *ḥadīth* scholars in the articulation of Sunnī Islam during the first half of third/ninth century. Despite the fact that the two most esteemed Sunnī books after the Qurʾān in the eyes of Sunnī Muslims, namely the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī and Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, are masterpieces of *ḥadīth* literature, the accomplishments of individual *ḥadīth* scholars have been ignored largely by European and American scholars for the past century.¹ The quintessential Sunnī disciplines of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism remain essentially unexamined by modern scholarship, perhaps partly due to Ignaz Goldziher's assertion long ago that "the science of tradition also was past its prime with its first classics."² This study not only departs sharply from this tradition of neglect of the *ḥadīth* literature, but argues that the fundamental principles of Sunnī Islam

¹ The only two studies of individual *ḥadīth* critics of which I am aware are Christopher Melchert's article on al-Bukhārī's *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* and Eeric Dickinson's analysis of Ibn Abī Hātim al-Rāzī's *Taqdīm*; see Christopher Melchert, "Bukhārī and Early Hadith Criticism," *JAO*, CXXI, 1 (2001), 7–19 and Eeric Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Hadith Criticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Juynboll's article on the critic Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj is quite idiosyncratic, since he asserts that Shuʿba invented several extremely widespread *ḥadīth* and credits him with the elevation of Anas b. Mālik to the status of a Companion of the Prophet (*ṣaḥābī*), the forging of pro-Anṣārī and eschatological *ḥadīth*, and even the invention of historical reports; Juynboll, "Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 160/776) and his position among the traditionists of Basra," *Le Muséon*, 111 (1998), 187–226. A very different portrait of Shuʿba will emerge below in the fourth chapter. Harald Motzki's ground-breaking study of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī's *Muṣannaf*, *Die Anfänge der islamischen Jurisprudenz* (Stuttgart, 1991) has been translated by Marion H. Katz as *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence: Meccan Fiqh before the Classical Schools* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) and demonstrates the extraordinary potential that this early text has to shed light on the nature of *ḥadīth* and law during the first two centuries of Islam.

² Ignaz Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, ed. and trans. S. M. Stern, II (Chicago: Aldine Atherton, 1971), 246. The original text was published as *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle: 1889–90).

were articulated initially by a coterie of master *ḥadīth* scholars on the eve of the compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

1.2 *The traditional theological and legal approaches to Sunnī Islam*

The primary Muslim sources that modern scholars have studied in their attempts to unravel the early history and development of Sunnī Islam have been almost exclusively of a theological or legal nature. Three of the leading scholars to embrace the theological approach are Montgomery Watt, Fazlur Rahman, and Josef van Ess. Watt acknowledges that his primary sources are the classic works of the Muslim scholars of sectarianism and divides the growth of Islamic thought into three phases entitled “Beginnings” (632–750 CE), “Century of Struggle” (750–850), and “Triumph of Sunnism” (850–945).³ His book provides a lucid presentation of the four major sectarian groups of Islam in the Umayyad period (Khawārij, Qadariyya, Murji’a, Shi’a) and traces their transformation in the ‘Abbāsīd era into the various groups of Mu’tazila, Sunnīs, and Shi’a. Watt relies heavily upon an early Murji’ī treatise and the works of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash’arī (d. 324/935–6) for his discussion of the articulation of Sunnī Islam, and postulates that “it was the early tenth century which witnessed the essential part of the process of the polarization of Islam into Sunnitē and Shi’ite.”⁴ The scholars of *ḥadīth* receive a scant five pages in this story, and the result is a narrative that gives excessive weight to a few theological works and ignores the major books of *ḥadīth* and prosopography that were being compiled throughout the third/ninth century.

Fazlur Rahman’s recently published posthumous work is his clearest articulation of what he calls the “formation of Sunni orthodoxy.”⁵

³ Montgomery Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1998 [1973]). The sources listed on page one include the heresiographical books of ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī and al-Shahrastānī, as well as *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash’arī (d. 324/935–6).

⁴ *The Formative Period*, 270–1. The Murji’ī tract is *al-Fiqh al-akbar*, a translation of which can be found in A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge, 1932).

⁵ Fazlur Rahman, *Revival and Reform in Islam*, ed. Ibrahim Moosa (Oxford, 2000). Chapter 1 is titled “Early sects and formation of Sunni Orthodoxy.” Fazlur Rahman’s *Islam* (second edition, Chicago, 1979), does contain a chapter on *ḥadīth*, but it is quite clear from its contents that he has not applied his sharp analytical mind thor-

The importance of theology in this presentation is evident in his observation that “developments within Sunnī orthodoxy can be viewed as the culmination of a process that was an immediate reaction against the Mu’tazila and to some extent the Shi’ī.”⁶ Shahrastānī’s interpretation of *irjā’* is quoted at length in this chapter, and Fazlur Rahman considers the predestinarian feature of the Murji’a to be a critical component of the first stage of Sunnism. The second stage of Sunnism was brought about by al-Ash’arī, whose cardinal sin, in Fazlur Rahman’s eyes, was that “he defined his extreme position by rejecting the idea that humanity can be validly said to act at all, let alone freely.”⁷ The second chapter explores the impacts of the “*irjā’*-ist mentality” in the centuries following al-Ash’arī on Sunnī Islam, a period that is characterized by political apathy and sheer passivity through mystical escapism. The role of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism in this process receives mention only in its negative capacity to supply pro-predestinarian forgeries to buttress the theological tenets of the Murji’a and proto-Sunnīs in their struggles against the free will Qadariyya and Mu’tazila. While it is no doubt true that both Murji’ī ideas and the seminal scholar Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ash’arī played roles in the articulation of Sunnī Islam, these two books of Watt and Fazlur Rahman should make it clear just how limited an understanding of the development of Sunnī Islam can be ascertained by merely studying the handful of relatively small classical Muslim works concerned with sectarianism and theology.

Van Ess’s magisterial *Theologie und Gesellschaft* fuses both the theological approach with what might be called a prosopographical approach to the early development of Islam. His basic methodology is to assemble all of the available biographical information of every individual who is affiliated with any sectarian group in any Islamic source. Thus we find exhaustive lists of Murji’a, Qadarīs, and, of course, Mu’tazila, as well as any information pertaining to their theological beliefs that van Ess has managed to unearth.⁸ Muhammad Zaman has observed that this approach has the unfortunate consequence of

oughly to any of the major works of the *ḥadīth* literature that have been studied in this project.

⁶ *Revival and Reform*, 33.

⁷ *Revival and Reform*, 57.

⁸ Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* (Berlin, 1991–7). See, for example volume II, 54–78 for the identification of 51 Qadarī *ḥadīth* scholars of Basra.

virtually ignoring the important relations between the 'Abbasid caliphs and the "protō-Sunnīs" of the third century,⁹ and it should be noted that the *ḥadīth* scholars in general are largely ignored too, presumably because the vast majority of them were not affiliated with any sectarian group.¹⁰ In fact, it is somewhat odd to be introduced to the extraordinary Kufan *ḥadīth* scholar and jurist Sufyān al-Thawrī as part of "anti-Murji'ī trends"¹¹ and the extremely significant Basran *ḥadīth* scholars Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, Sulaymān al-Taymī, and 'Abdullāh b. 'Awn as part of "die Opposition gegen 'Amr b. 'Ubad"¹² since their identities and contributions to Islamic civilization probably had relatively little to do with being in opposition to these early sectarian groups and individuals. While van Ess has provided an immense service in his presentation of the most extensive lists of Murji'a and Qadarīs of the first two centuries of Islam, it has come at the cost of neglecting the creative disciplines of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism that were maturing in the shadow of the Mu'tazilī florescence and the *miḥna*¹³ and whose practitioners, in my opinion, articulated the core principles of Sunnī Islam.

The second major approach towards the historical development of Islam focuses upon the rise of the legal schools (*madhāhib*). The most influential work in this domain is Joseph Schacht's *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*.¹⁴ This book is based almost exclusively on an acute reading of eleven legal treatises of Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), the *Muwatta'* of Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795) and various legal works of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 189/805). The basic picture of the historical development of Islamic law that Schacht describes consists of an initial phase of "ancient schools" in Medina, Iraq, and Syria that were deeply influenced by

⁹ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early 'Abbāsids* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 4.

¹⁰ The relatively rare employment of sectarian labels by *ḥadīth* critics is demonstrated below in chapter VII.6.

¹¹ *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, 221–28.

¹² *Ibid.*, II, 342–70.

¹³ The relative unimportance of the *miḥna*, or "Inquisition," inaugurated by the Caliph al-Ma'mūn and terminated by al-Mutawakkil with regard to *ḥadīth* scholarship is analyzed below in chapter V.3.

¹⁴ Joseph Schacht, *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford, 1953). A contemporary scholar who publishes extensively on Sunnī Islam from the legal perspective is Christopher Melchert; see his book *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law: 9th–10th Centuries C.E.* (Brill, 1997).

"Umayyad practice," followed by a radical transformation through the legal theories of al-Shāfi'ī into what have been known to this day as the four Sunnī *madhāhib*, or schools of law.¹⁵ This periodization has been accepted widely by modern scholars, such as Marshall Hodgson, although Hodgson remarks perceptively in a footnote that "perhaps [Schacht] gives too much credit to al-Shāfi'ī" in this schema.¹⁶ Furthermore, Harald Motzki and John Burton have argued that there exists little evidence that Schacht's concept of "Umayyad administrative practice" exerted any influence on the development of Islamic law.¹⁷ While this basic historical outline of the development of the main Sunnī schools of law more or less follows the contours depicted by Muslim scholars, such as Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083),¹⁸ Schacht achieved a great deal of attention for his extreme opinions concerning the *ḥadīth* and, given the fundamental role of *ḥadīth* literature in this book, it is necessary for us to address them briefly.

Schacht, who was deeply influenced by the work of Ignaz Goldziher,¹⁹ argues in *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* that:

- 1) A great many traditions (*ḥadīth*) were put into circulation only after al-Shāfi'ī's time.

¹⁵ Note that Schacht refers to the Sunnī schools of law as the "orthodox" schools of law (for example, *Origins*, p. 6); it is clear that he equates Sunnism with orthodoxy throughout this work.

¹⁶ Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, I (Chicago, 1974), 324. This periodization is presented lucidly in the "Masters of *fiqh*" chart on p. 319. It has been refuted strongly by Wael Hallaq, who argues that Schacht's thesis "creates a detour in early Islamic legal history, a detour that is supported by neither common sense nor the evidence of the early sources;" Wael Hallaq, "From Regional to Personal Schools of Law? A Reevaluation," *Islamic Law and Society*, 8.1 (2001), 1–26.

¹⁷ See Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 296 and John Burton, *An Introduction to the Ḥadīth* (Edinburgh, 1994), xxii. The theories of both Schacht and Goldziher are compared and mildly critiqued by Burton in his introduction (ix–xxv). His personal opinion, that *ḥadīth* should be understood as exegesis of various "obscurities" manifest in the Qur'ān, is intriguing but not particularly convincing. Marion Katz's recent book has, *pace* Burton, found significant Umayyad interference in the shaping of Islamic law in the realm of ritual purity (*ṭahāra*); see chapter three of Marion Holmes Katz, *Body of Text* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).

¹⁸ Abū Ishāq's useful little book of the history of Muslim jurists is arranged geographically prior to the foundation of five Sunnī schools of law (*madhāhib*), and then by school until his day. However, he discusses legal scholars from nine cities or regions in the pre-*madhāhib* period, as opposed to Schacht's focus on merely Iraq (Kufa), Hijāz (Mecca and Medina), and Syria; see Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut, 1970).

¹⁹ Goldziher's eight chapters on *ḥadīth* in *Muslim Studies* will be discussed below in a few paragraphs.

- 2) The first considerable body of legal traditions (*ḥadīth*) from the Prophet originated towards the middle of the second century
- 3) The *isnāds* show a tendency to grow backwards and to claim higher and higher authority until they arrive at the Prophet
- 4) The evidence of legal traditions carries us back to about the year 100 AH only²⁰

Although several scholars have questioned and attempted to refute these main points,²¹ it is probably most instructive here to explain *how* Schacht arrived at such radical conclusions. The most significant errors of Schacht, in my opinion, were his choice of sources and his general understanding of *ḥadīth*.²² While it is logical to use legal treatises by a few prominent scholars in order to understand their individual styles of legal reasoning, it is a grave error to ignore entirely the evidence present in *ḥadīth* collections that were compiled simultaneously with and prior to the lives of these jurists.²³ How is it possible that a generation or two of scholars invented tens of thousands of *ḥadīth* between the lifetimes of al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820) and Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855)? The only way to ignore this question is to blind oneself to the 30,000-*ḥadīth* *Musnad* of the latter and adhere to works of scholars who are rarely, if ever, included among the lists of the great compilers and critics of *ḥadīth*.²⁴ Indeed, the thought of

²⁰ Schacht, *Origins*, 4–5.

²¹ The first serious alternative proposals and refutations of Schacht's theories was by Nabia Abbott in *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, II, *Qur'anic Commentary and Tradition* (Chicago, 1967) and Fuat Sezgin in *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, I (Leiden, 1967). The former study was based on Abbott's careful reading of books pertaining to the disciplines of *ḥadīth* transmission and old papyri fragments of *ḥadīths*, and the latter was done so on Sezgin's thorough familiarity with early Arabic manuscripts and the bibliographical literature. A full book-length refutation of Schacht's book is M. Mustapha al-Azami, *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: The Islamic Texts Society, 1985). Finally, Harald Motzki's recently cited book, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, and his articles "Der Fiqh des Zuhri: die Quellenproblematik," *Der Islam*, 68 (1991), 1–44 and "Quo vadis *Ḥadīth*-Forschung?" *Der Islam*, 73 (1996), 40–80 and 193–231, address many of the problematic theses regarding *ḥadīth* propounded by Schacht and his disciple G. H. A. Juynboll.

²² This opinion has been articulated by M. M. Azami; see his *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, Third edition (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1992), 247.

²³ Motzki astutely remarks that the two earliest critical reviews of Schacht's theories came from A. Guillaume and J. W. Fück, scholars who found a contradiction between his new ideas and their own research on the *Sīra* of Ibn Ishāq, a work that contains *ḥadīth* and predates *all* of the legal texts that Schacht examined; see *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 28–9.

²⁴ I show below in the fourth chapter that, of Schacht's four main authorities, only Mālik b. Anas was considered a major authority in *ḥadīth* by a majority of the

espousing a theory of *ḥadīth* on the basis of a few books that have never been considered part of the genre of *ḥadīth* literature seems to be risky at best, and methodologically unsound at worst.

Yet even if Schacht considered all of the *ḥadīth* in the classical collections highly suspect, there is another genre of works, crucial to this book, which he should have investigated more carefully prior to his arrival at such radical conclusions. This is the genre of biographical dictionaries, enormous works which contain succinct entries on thousands of scholars in the disciplines of *ḥadīth* transmission, law (*fiqh*), poetry, and other arts and sciences.²⁵ The earliest extant biographical dictionary of religious scholars is *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* of Muḥammad b. Sa'd (d. 230/845), a younger contemporary of the jurist al-Shāfiʿī, upon whom Schacht relied so heavily for his theories.²⁶ Ibn Sa'd's book is a veritable history of thousands of *ḥadīth* transmitters and is arranged both geographically and chronologically. The basic unit of time is the *ṭabaqa*, or generation, and Ibn Sa'd groups scholars according to their primary city or region of residence, generation by generation, back to earliest generation of Muslims, the *ṣaḥāba*, or Companions of the Prophet.²⁷ One would almost have to consider this entire multi-volume book to be a forgery in order to subscribe to Schacht's theses. Although Schacht cites the Leiden edition of Ibn Sa'd's book in his bibliography, it is clear that he rejected

master critics of the third through sixth Islamic centuries. Al-Shāfiʿī is only included in two scholars' lists (those of Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn 'Adī) and al-Shaybānī in one (that of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī). Abū Yūsuf is not mentioned at all.

²⁵ The best overview and introduction to the world of biographical dictionaries is Wadād al-Qāḍī, "Biographical Dictionaries: Inner Structure and Cultural Significance," *The Book in the Islamic World*, ed. George N. Atiyeh (Albany, 1995), 93–122.

²⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1995–6). For a discussion of the complicated publishing history of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* and its role in this book, see V.4.1. The only complete edition of this book is the 2001 Cairo edition edited by 'Alī Muḥammad 'Umar; I refer to this edition with the abbreviation *TK* 2001 and employ it extensively in chapters seven and eight. It should be noted that although Ibn Sa'd was a younger contemporary of al-Shāfiʿī (who settled in Egypt), he makes no mention of him anywhere in his book. Ibn Sa'd's opinion of Mālik is very positive, whereas his opinions of al-Shaybānī and Abū Yūsuf are qualified by their quality of being "overwhelmed" by legal reasoning (*ghuliba bi-l-ra'y*) which diminished their accuracy in *ḥadīth* transmission; see *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, V, 287–90 (Mālik); VII, 162 (Abū Yūsuf) and 164 (al-Shaybānī).

²⁷ For a broad survey of biographical dictionaries arranged according to generations (*ṭabaqāt*) of scholars, see Ibrahim Hafsī, "Recherches sur le genre *ṭabaqāt* dans la littérature arabe," *Arabica*, xxiii (1976), 227–65; xxiv (1977), 1–41, 150–86. The topic of *ṭabaqāt* will be discussed in much greater detail below in II.3.

the veracity of the vast majority of its contents when he postulated his theories concerning *ḥadīth* transmission.²⁸

Schacht's third major error, after ignoring all of the evidence found in early *ḥadīth* books and biographical dictionaries, was to base his conclusions on a very limited number of "legal" *ḥadīth*.²⁹ The "Index of Legal Problems" at the end of *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* reveals Schacht's preference for issues pertaining to obligations, sale, and penal law and his disinterest in laws pertaining to acts of worship, such as prayer and fasting.³⁰ Indeed, this finding is not surprising, as a cursory glance at the contents of either *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* or *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* attributed to his primary source, al-Shaybānī, reveals little interest in pious devotion and great attention to commercial and criminal law.³¹ Finally, the fact that many *ḥadīth* have nothing to do with the *sharī'a* obligates the researcher to go beyond the texts of a few prominent jurists prior to the formulation of any sweeping theory of this literature.³²

The crucial importance of appropriate source selection for the investigation of the emergence of Sunnism in the third/ninth century should be obvious by now. It should also be clear that the relatively short theological and legal treatises that have hitherto been used to shed light on the development of the religion of Islam in its first centuries are insufficient for the task at hand. The works of Watt, Fazlur Rahman, Schacht, and even Hodgson leave us with the erroneous impression that the articulation of Sunnism was largely

²⁸ Eerik Dickinson seems to have fallen into the same trap as Schacht, as he has ignored entirely the contents of Ibn Sa'd's *al-Tabaqat al-kabīr* in his recent book *The Development of Early Sunnite Hadīth Criticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). I challenge his dating of the origins of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism in chapter four.

²⁹ This error was discerned by Burton, although he felt that it skewed Schacht's understanding of *fiqh* instead of the *ḥadīth*; see *An Introduction to the Hadīth*, xviii.

³⁰ Schacht, *Origins*, 341–3. Part of the reason for this bias is the fact that Schacht applies modern Western notions of legal categories to classical Islamic law and thus understates, if not ignores, vast regions of Islamic jurisprudence in addition to the extra-legal *ḥadīth* literature.

³¹ Shaybānī's interests should be contrasted with the *Muwatta'* of Mālik, also used extensively by Schacht, the first half of which is devoted to issues pertaining to prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage.

³² Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874) groups *ḥadīth* into three broad categories in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: laws and regulations (*sunan al-dīn wa aḥkāmih*), reward and punishment in the Hereafter (*al-thawāb wa l-'iqāb*), and exhortations to piety (*al-taḥḥīb wa l-tarḥīb*); *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2000), 46–7. Other extra-legal categories of *ḥadīth* include Qur'ānic exegesis and prophetic history.

the result of two scholars, al-Ash'arī and al-Shāfi'ī, and that a few other jurists, like Mālik b. Anas, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, the Qādī Abū Yūsuf, and Ibn Ḥanbal, played a strong supporting role in this endeavor. Van Ess, on the other hand, despite his description of hundreds of individuals, prefers to credit the emergence of Sunnism to the intellectual atmosphere of the city of Baghdad rather than to any circle of scholars in particular.³³ It is therefore necessary to turn to the *ḥadīth* literature and its auxiliary disciplines in order to break the hegemony of the theological and legal approaches to the early construction of Sunnī Islam.

I.3 Sunnī ḥadīth literature: its nature and utility for this project

The Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature consists of three major genres of works: *ḥadīth* collections, biographical dictionaries of *ḥadīth*-transmitters, and expositions of the "*ḥadīth* disciplines" (*ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*). Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī discusses briefly sixteen major *ḥadīth* collections and six biographical dictionaries in *Ḥadīth Literature*.³⁴ Included in this list are the *Muwatta'* of Mālik b. Anas, the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, and *al-Tabaqāt al-kabīr* of Ibn Sa'd. Ṣiddīqī also draws attention to the three other early extant *ḥadīth* collections of al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 203/819), 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/826), and Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849), only one of which has received a monograph by a Western scholar.³⁵ In fact, none of the books mentioned by Ṣiddīqī, including the 'six canonical' *ḥadīth* collections, has received a thorough published study in the West.³⁶ One of the goals of this book

³³ Zaman remarks that van Ess credits Baghdad with causing a 'brain drain' from the older cities of Islam and providing a location for the leveling of theological differences; see Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early 'Abbasids*, 161 and van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, 29–30.

³⁴ Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Ḥadīth Literature* (Cambridge, 1993).

³⁵ This exception is 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Musannaf*, which, has been mentioned, is examined by Harald Motzki in *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*. Marion Katz has also made extensive use of the *Musannafs* of 'Abd al-Razzāq and Ibn Abī Shayba in her previously mentioned study of ritual purity *Body of Text*.

³⁶ The 'six canonical *ḥadīth* books' are *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, and the *Sunan* works of Abū Dāwūd (d. 275/888), al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915), and Ibn Māja (d. 273/886). We shall see below in chapter 2, that Ibn al-Salāḥ (d. 643/1245) considered only the first five of these texts to be the most important *ḥadīth* collections. See *Muqaddima Ibn al-Salāḥ*, ed. 'Ā'isha 'Abd al-Raḥmān bint al-Shāṭi' (Cairo, 1990), 651–2.

is to facilitate future study of these extremely significant Muslim texts and offer fresh conceptual and practical approaches to this vast, misunderstood, and largely unexplored literature.³⁷

It is necessary that we examine briefly the most influential study on *ḥadīth* in European scholarship, namely Ignaz Goldziher's eight chapters of *Muhammedanische Studien* published in 1890, in order to identify some of its strengths and weaknesses.³⁸ Goldziher continues to be recognized as one of the primary founders of the modern European discipline of Islamic Studies, and his fame lies in part because of his arguments that much of the *ḥadīth* literature was fabricated.³⁹ Unlike Schacht, Goldziher combined both impressive knowledge as to certain details of *ḥadīth* scholarship along with prejudices that clouded his assertions. Examples of his accurate remarks include the differentiation between *ḥadīth* and *sunna*,⁴⁰ the recognition that *ḥadīth* criticism began with Ibn 'Awn, Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, and Ibn al-Mubārak,⁴¹ that Ibn Jurayj and Sa'īd b. Abī 'Arūba were among the first to arrange books according to chapters,⁴² and that the early *ḥadīth* scholars (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*) paid almost no regard to Abū Ḥanīfa.⁴³ Goldziher even uncovered a report that Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī was

³⁷ It should be noted that the state of the field for Imāmī Shī'ī *ḥadīth* is not much better than that for the Sunnī literature. A useful introduction to the four earliest 'canonical' *ḥadīth* books of the Imāmī Shī'a is Robert Gleave, "Between *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh*: The 'canonical' Imāmī collections of *akḥbār*," *Islamic Law and Society*, 8.3 (2001), 350–82. As for Ismā'īlī, Zaydī, or Khārījī *ḥadīth*, I am not aware of anything at this time in European languages.

³⁸ See above note 2 for the relevant bibliographical information.

³⁹ For testimonies of Goldziher's seminal role in the foundation of Islamic studies, see the introduction to *The Jewish Discovery of Islam*, ed. Martin Kraemer (Tel Aviv: The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1999), 13–17 as well as Lawrence Conrad's essay "Ignaz Goldziher on Ernest Renan: from Orientalist Philology to the Study of Islam" contained within it (pp. 137–180). Herbert Berg credits the entire school of skepticism with regard to *isnāds* to the work of Goldziher, whereas the school that argues for their veracity is associated with Fuat Sezgin; see Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000), 9–12 and 49–50. Berg's own low opinion concerning the authenticity of the literature can be found on page 215 of his book: "Isnads, therefore were attached to material from the beginning of the 3rd century . . . after which these isnads, like the mats to which they were attached, continued to be subject to organic growth."

⁴⁰ *Muslim Studies*, II, 24.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, II, 135. This opinion is supported by our findings in chapters 4 and 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, II, 196. However, Goldziher felt that these books had "nothing to do with the collecting of *ḥadīth*," perhaps due to his assumption that the majority of the transmitted material contained within these books did not purport to go back to the Prophet Muḥammad.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, II, 81 and 235.

among the first scholars to include Ibn Māja's *Sunan* among the most esteemed 'six books' of the Sunnī tradition.⁴⁴

Despite his best efforts, however, Goldziher made highly questionable assertions in *Muslim Studies*, perhaps partly due to his belief that the more "natural" and "honest" means of constructing a religious law was the approach employed by the jurists (*aṣḥāb al-ra'y*), in contrast with the methods of the *ḥadīth* scholars.⁴⁵ He asserted that "every *ra'y* or *hawā*, every *sunna* and *bid'a* has sought and found expression in the form of a *ḥadīth*" and that the "pious community was ready with great credibility to believe anything that they encountered as a traditional saying of the Prophet."⁴⁶ A potentially far more serious allegation of his, which I endeavor to refute in the seventh chapter, is that "only in rare cases was it possible to reach agreement on the degree of trustworthiness of a person."⁴⁷ Finally, Goldziher's propositions that the last "original *ḥadīth* work" was the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965) and that Islamic literature's "fresh immediacy decayed as quickly as it developed . . . giving way to dry and lifeless compilation"⁴⁸ not only reflect the dearth of sources that Goldziher had at his disposal when he was formulating his theories about *ḥadīth*, but reflect his personal antipathy towards the very tradition of *ḥadīth* compilation that inevitably impacted his theses that have carried so much weight over the past century.

One basic question remains, though: Why should we turn to the *ḥadīth* literature in order to understand the development of Sunnī Islam? The first reason is the sheer volume of the literature and number of Muslims involved in its transmission over the first several centuries of Islamic civilization. The first large books, called *muṣannaf*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 240.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 78.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 126 and 133, respectively.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 143. If by this statement Goldziher means that it was unusual for critics to apply the *identical* grades to transmitters, he is of course correct. Although later biographical dictionaries often include dissenting opinions concerning a transmitter's overall reliability, we shall see in our comparison of the grades of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal in chapter seven that there was a high level of consensus as to the whether individual transmitters were trustworthy. See also the appendices of my doctoral dissertation "The Arts of *Ḥadīth* Compilation and Criticism: A study of the emergence of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Chicago, 2002), 466–506.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 247 and 245, respectively. I argue below in chapter 3 that the last original *ḥadīth* compilations date to the fifth/eleventh century.

or *taṣnīf* ("compilations arranged by categories"), in the Islamic tradition were probably *ḥadīth* works that were compiled in the middle second/late eighth century.⁴⁹ The vast scope of these works, as well as those of the following century, indicates the deep conviction a significant number of Muslim scholars felt towards the importance of this material *prior* to the legal theories of al-Shāfi'ī that formally raised this corpus of literature to the status of divine revelation, albeit secondary to the Qur'ān.

A second, and more important reason to examine these texts is the remarkable persistence of value the most authoritative *ḥadīth* books have held in the Sunnī Muslim conscience. The *Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* of Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874) have been considered the two most respected works after the Qur'ān since at least the fourth/tenth century.⁵⁰ Whereas the Sunnī schools of law have fluctuated in number over the centuries⁵¹ and developed their own individual corpuses of texts, the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim have shared a consistent degree of reverence to all Sunnī Muslims, regardless of rite.⁵² This achievement is even more impressive in light of the existence of later

⁴⁹ The first large books of this nature were compiled by Ḥammād b. Salama (d. 167/784) and Ibn Abī 'Arūba (d. 156/773) according to Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348); *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, I (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1998), 134 and 151. Ibn 'Adī (d. 365/976) quotes 'Abd al-Razzāq as crediting Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767) and al-Awzā'ī (157/774) with this distinction; see *al-Kāmil fī du'afā' al-rijāl*, I (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), 100.

⁵⁰ Goldziher credits the basis for their authority upon the consensus (*ijmā'*) of the (Sunnī) Muslim community; *Muslim Studies*, II, 236.

⁵¹ Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī includes chapters for the following five schools in his *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'*: Shāfi'ī, Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Ḥanbalī, and Zāhirī. He also makes reference to the short-lived school of al-Ṭabarī (p. 93). Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ substitutes the school of Sufyān al-Thawrī for that of the Zāhiriyya (*Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 649). Al-Suyūṭī includes the Zāhiriyya and school of Ṭabarī, and adds the schools of al-Awzā'ī and Ishāq b. Rāhawayh (d. 238/853); *Tadhīb al-rāwī*, II (Beirut, 1998), 204.

⁵² The veneration of *both* of these books is all the more surprising given the fact that the anonymous *ḥadīth* scholars whom Muslim chastises in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* for requiring proof that actual contact between every two transmitters in an *isnād* occurred (instead of merely being satisfied that they were contemporaries) is identified by al-Dhahabī as none other than al-Bukhārī and his teacher 'Alī b. al-Madīnī; see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, XII (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1986), 573. Note that Juynboll was unable to identify these anonymous individuals and guessed that Muslim was referring to al-Ḥusayn al-Karābīsī; see his article "Muslim's introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*," *JSAI*, 5 (1984), 293–4.

compilations of *ḥadīth* by preeminent scholars throughout the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries.⁵³

The success and resilience of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* books must be seen as being directly correlated to the high opinion in which their two compilers have been held in the field of *ḥadīth* criticism. The process of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism (*al-jarḥ wa[-]l-ta'dīl*) seems to have begun in second/eighth century⁵⁴ and the earliest extant compilations on the reliability of *ḥadīth* transmitters include three of the primary texts that I analyze in the seventh chapter of this book: *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* of Ibn Sa'd, 'Abbās al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh* based on the critical opinions of Yahyā b. Ma'īn (d. 233/848), and the *ʿilal* works of Ibn Ḥanbal.⁵⁵ Al-Bukhārī and Muslim were able to build upon the work of this preceding generation of master *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics, some of whom were their direct teachers, and it is not a coincidence that al-Bukhārī's books of criticism have acquired the exalted position as the most authoritative books in this genre.⁵⁶

⁵³ Many of these scholars will be mentioned in the historical overview in chapter three. The massive *ḥadīth* collections of al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), and Abū Muḥammad al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) basically mark the end of original *ḥadīth* collections. (Even though Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's large compilations *al-Tamhīd* and *al-Istidhkār* are technically commentaries on the *Muwaffa'* of Mālik, they incorporate so much additional material that they should be considered 'original' works in their own right). There seems to have been a shift in the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries towards the synthesis and exegesis of the earlier famous collections, so that by the seventh/thirteenth century Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ remarked that *ḥadīth* not found in earlier works should, in general, be shunned; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 307. The most likely practical reason for this transformation was the fact that the chain of transmitters (*isnād*) between the Prophet Muḥammad and the students of *ḥadīth* had grown too long after five centuries, so as to render it unwieldy and unreliable.

⁵⁴ Three periods of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism are identified in detail in chapter four.

⁵⁵ The various recensions of these latter two works are discussed in V.4.2 and V.4.3. Other major *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics of this generation include 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Ibn Rāhawayh, and Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Fallās; see below, chapters four and five, for more details.

⁵⁶ These books include *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* and *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*. The editor of the 1998 Riyadh edition of *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Laḥidān, has demonstrated that the 1977 Aleppo edition of *al-Tārīkh al-ṣaḥīḥ* is actually *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ* (I, 30, 55–7). Since *al-Tārīkh al-ṣaḥīḥ* is solely concerned with the *ṣaḥāba*, it would be of limited value for *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism (the references to this book in Sezgin, *GAS*, I, p. 133, should probably be corrected to read *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*). Another small work of criticism by al-Bukhārī that has been published is *Kitāb al-du'afā' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Buran al-Dannawī (Beirut, 1984). Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ declares al-Bukhārī's *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* to be one of the fundamental texts in his reading list

I.4 Methodology

I.4.1

The two most intimidating features of the *ḥadīth* literature are its sheer volume and the magnitude of the number of transmitters involved in its historical development.⁵⁷ Given this challenging situation, it is critical to select both the proper guides and techniques for organizing the material in such a way that one has a large enough sample of reports and biographies so as to be faithful to the material. Furthermore, the transmission and criticism of *ḥadīth* continues to this day, over 1400 years after the Prophet Muḥammad's death, wherever Muslims are to be found.⁵⁸ Therefore, this book is divided into two main sections, both of which involve multiple databases that I have designed in order to analyze the prosopographical material present in the biographical dictionaries that I have consulted.

I.4.2 Part I: The Construction of Conceptual and Historical Frameworks for Inquiry

Part I consists of four chapters whose purpose is to move from a broad overview of the development of the Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature to the narrow generation of critics who flourished just prior to al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Chapter two relies upon the classification of the *ḥadīth* disciplines in 65 categories by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245) in his *Muqaddima* and several books of al-Dhahabī. I discuss three aspects of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddima* in order to secure the conceptual framework of this project. First, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ identifies the most significant books and scholars involved in the project of *ḥadīth* transmission.⁵⁹

for the aspiring *ḥadīth* student; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 433. Christopher Melchert has published an article arguing for the authenticity of *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* in order to mute the skepticism raised by Norman Calder concerning its attribution to al-Bukhārī; see his "Bukhārī and Early Hadith Criticism" cited in the first footnote of this chapter.

⁵⁷ An indication of the scale of the project of *ḥadīth* transmission can be gleaned from the fact that Ibn Ḥajar mentions 8826 names of men and women whose names appear in the *isnāds* of the six canonical Sunnī books (as well as other early collections) in his concise handbook *Tagrīb al-tahdhīb* (Beirut, 1996).

⁵⁸ For a useful survey of some modern debates concerning the *ḥadīth*, see Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge, 1996).

⁵⁹ *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, categories 28 and 60 (pp. 432–3 and 649–53).

Secondly, I examine how Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ articulates the fundamental Sunnī position with regard to the didactic authority of all *ṣaḥāba*.⁶⁰ Finally, I show how Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's entire systematic categorization of the *ḥadīth* disciplines demonstrates the fundamental role of *isnād* criticism (*ʿilm al-rijāl*) and the central significance of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism in the venture of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship.⁶¹

The second section of chapter two is devoted to the construction of a historical framework for the first seven centuries of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship. The primary works that I use for this task are three books by the extraordinary Syrian scholar Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), who has been called "the Historian of Islam" (*muʿarrikh al-Islām*) by his students and successors.⁶² Al-Dhahabī is known not only for his magnificent works of history, many of which are arranged according to *ṭabaqāt*, but as a master critic of *ḥadīth* and its transmitters as well.⁶³ This section discusses al-Dhahabī's use of *ṭabaqāt* of varying lengths in his *ḥadīth*-transmitter related works, and organizes the master *ḥadīth* scholars of the first seven centuries whom he praises in three of his books: *Mizān al-ʿitidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, *al-Mūqīza fī ʿilm muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*, and *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*. I also clarify the utility of the *ṭabaqāt* form of periodization for the discussion of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism in this section, and special attention is devoted to al-Dhahabī's use of the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*.

The third chapter consists of a historical articulation of the development of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship on the basis of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's and al-Dhahabī's preferred scholars whose identities I uncover in the previous chapter. The twenty-one *ṭabaqāt* structure of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* has proven expedient for this endeavor, as all of the master scholars mentioned in the *Muqaddima* of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, and al-Dhahabī's *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* and *al-Mūqīza* have entries in this book. I have grouped al-Dhahabī's twenty-one *ṭabaqāt* into seven phases in order to clarify

⁶⁰ *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, category 39 (pp. 485–505).

⁶¹ *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, category 23 is concerned with *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism (pp. 288–311). Note that '*ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism' is the expression that I am using for the Arabic *al-jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl* and that it is a more specific discipline than '*ḥadīth* criticism', the latter of which includes criticism of both the *isnād* and the text (*matn*).

⁶² For a list of scholars who praise him with this honorific title (*laqab*), see 'Abd al-Sattār al-Shaykh, *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī* (Damascus, 1994), 335–9.

⁶³ His most famous work of *ḥadīth* transmitter criticism, *Mizān al-ʿitidāl fī naqd al-rijāl*, contains entries for 11,053 transmitters; *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, 420–3.

the hitherto neglected historical development of *ḥadīth* scholarship during the first seven centuries of Islamic civilization. The results of this chapter not only demonstrate the critical importance of the third/ninth century in this venture, but also depict the dynamic vivacity of Sunnī *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism throughout the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries, long after the compilation of the famous 'six books.'

Chapter four builds upon this historical survey by examining the favorite master scholars of ten famous Sunnī *ḥadīth* critics who flourished during the third through seventh phases of *ḥadīth* scholarship. The critics whose preferences are investigated in this chapter are 'Alī b. al-Madīnī (d. 234/849), Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874), Ibn Abī Ḥātim (d. 327/939), Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 354/965), Ibn 'Adī (d. 365/976), al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014), al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), and al-Dhahabī. The opinions of these scholars serve as a useful tool for the purpose of identifying three periods and three classes of critics in the history of Sunnī *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and confirm the crucial role played by the scholars of the third/ninth century in general, and Ibn Ma'īn and Ibn Ḥanbal in particular. I devote special attention to the first two generations of critics, such as Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Sufyān b. 'Uyayna, and Ibn al-Mubārak in order to ascertain whether they really were *ḥadīth* critics, or whether later scholars depicted them as such in order to accord this discipline greater authority and prestige, as at least one modern scholar has suggested.⁶⁴

The fifth chapter of this book zeroes in on the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibn Ḥanbal, since it is first generation of critics for whom we have extensive records of their opinions. The first section of this chapter is a general survey of distinguished Muslim men of letters and religion who flourished during the first half of the third/ninth century. The primary source for this database is al-Dhahabī's *Ṣiyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, the tenth and eleventh *ṭabaqāt* of which I examine in detail. I devote particular attention to the major *ḥadīth* scholars of this age, many of whom were teachers of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The purpose of this section is to provide a sketch of

⁶⁴ This is the opinion of Eeric Dickinson in his previously cited work that I endeavor to refute.

the intellectual life at the time of the emergence of Sunnī Islam, in order to better comprehend how the *ḥadīth* scholars of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibn Ḥanbal fit into the greater world community during this period of Islamic civilization.

The second section of chapter five consists of a brief reconsideration of the significance of the infamous *miḥna*, or inquisition, that occurred during reigns of the caliphs al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, and al-Wāthiq.⁶⁵ This episode has, until recently, been invested with much credit towards the emergence of Sunnism and even the "separation of state and religion."⁶⁶ A close reading of the aforementioned prosopographical works of al-Dhahabī indicates that the impact of the *miḥna* upon the formation of Sunnī Islam was little more than the reaffirmation of a single theological position that was most likely upheld by the majority of *ḥadīth* transmitters prior to the entire affair.⁶⁷ If anything, the episode of the *miḥna* has distracted Western historians from investigating the far more historically significant processes of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism that were occurring in Baghdad during the same period.

The final section of the fifth chapter provides biographical sketches of the three primary scholars of this period—Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn and Ibn Ḥanbal—whose works are analyzed in Part II of this book. I pay careful attention to the itineraries of these three men in their quests for *ḥadīth*, as well as to the largely obscure lives of their respective primary transmitter-pupils. Thus, I also present the biographies of Ibn Sa'd's pupils Ibn Fahm (d. 289/902) and al-Ḥārith b. Abī

⁶⁵ These caliphs ruled from 198/813–218/833, 218/833–227/842, and 227/842–232/47, respectively. The exact termination date of the *miḥna* is unclear, and Hinds has argued that it was faded out gradually during the first four or five years of the reign of al-Mutawakkil (232/847–247/861); see Martin Hinds, "miḥna," *EI2*, VII, 2–6.

⁶⁶ This last quote comes from the title of Ira Lapidus' 1975 *IJMES* article "The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society," and the exaggerated import of this event is easily observable in Martin Hinds' entry on the *miḥna* in the *EI2*. The importance of the *miḥna* has been challenged by Muhammad Qasim Zaman in *Religion and Politics under the 'Abbāsids*. While Zaman's book offers great insight into the relationship between the state and religious scholars, it pays far closer attention to the state's role in religion avoids analysis of the internal dynamics and compilations of the influential *ḥadīth* scholars of this period.

⁶⁷ This theological position is, of course, that the Qur'ān is the "speech of God" (*kalām Allāh*) and therefore not created. The innovation of the notion of the created Qur'ān is attributed to Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746) and was accepted by the Khawārij, most of the Zaydiyya, many of the Imāmī Shī'a, and all of the Mu'tazila; see al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyin*, II (Cairo, 1969), 256–9.

Usāma (d. 282/895), Ibn Maʿīn's student Abū l-Faḍl ʿAbbās al-Dūrī (d. 271/884–5), and Ibn Ḥanbal's son and sole compiler of the *Musnad*, ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad (d. 290/903) at the conclusion of this chapter.

I.4.3 Part II: The Three Principles of Ḥadīth-Scholar Sunnism: Ṣaḥāba, ḥadīth-transmitter criticism, and a historical vision

Part II explores the nature of the three pillars upon which I argue Sunnī Islam was constructed by the *ḥadīth* scholars, namely the collective authority of the *ṣaḥāba*, the invention and broad application of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, and a shared historical vision as to paths by which most *ḥadīth* traversed the two century gulf between the life of the Prophet Muḥammad and the compilation of books. Chapter six is devoted to the first of these pillars, namely the collective authority of the *ṣaḥāba*, and begins with an extensive review of the individual *ṣaḥāba* who were involved in the intra-Muslim conflict that plagued the first thirty years of the post-prophetic Islamic community. While the importance of the first *fitna* upon Islamic thought and group formation is hardly a new discovery, my presentation of the surprisingly large number of *ṣaḥāba* who were involved actively in these early conflicts suggests that the Sunnī principle of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* was a more radical proposition than is generally acknowledged in the secondary literature.

The next section of the sixth chapter begins with an analysis of two solutions to the problem of the intra-*ṣaḥāba* conflicts that failed to capture the hearts of more than a minority of the Muslim community. The first of these solutions is that put forth by the Imāmī Shīʿa, who either interpreted the concept of *ridda*, normally associated with the rebellious Bedouin tribes who were subdued by Abū Bakr, as a reference to the alleged mass apostasy of the *ṣaḥāba* upon the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, or eliminated the *ṣaḥāba* from the discourse altogether by means of superhuman Imāms and creative Qurʾānic exegesis.⁶⁸ The other minority solution to the problem of the intra-*ṣaḥāba* conflicts is that of the Zaydiyya and Baghdādī Muʿtazila, which accepted the authority of all of the *ṣaḥāba* except those who fought against ʿAlī at Ṣiffin, and argued strongly for the

⁶⁸ I base my findings on an analysis of the first section of al-Tūsī's abridgement of al-Kashshī's *Ikhtiyār maʾrifat al-rijāl* and two chapters of al-Kulaynī's *Uṣūl al-kāfi*.

superiority of ʿAlī over Abū Bakr on the basis of a comparison of their respective qualities.⁶⁹ I discuss the reactions of the Imāmī Shīʿa and the Zaydiyya/Baghdādī Muʿtazila to the intra-*ṣaḥāba* conflicts at some length because they demonstrate both radical and moderate alternative positions to the Sunnī principle of the collective authority of the *ṣaḥāba*, and may have contributed to the hardening of the Sunnī position on issues such as the superiority of Abū Bakr to ʿAlī.

Three Sunnī solutions to the problem of the intra-*ṣaḥāba* conflicts can be discerned in the *ḥadīth* literature of the third/ninth century. The first of these solutions is the inclusion of chapters devoted to the merits (*faḍāʾil*) of the *ṣaḥāba* in major *ḥadīth* compilations, such as the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba, that praised consistently seventeen male and three female companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, several of whom had been on opposing sides in these conflicts.⁷⁰ The second solution, encapsulated in Ibn Saʿd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, was to collect biographical information for about 1371 male and 629 female *ṣaḥāba*, in order to demonstrate the collective role of these men and women in the formative period of Islam, as well as distinguish those individuals who embraced Islam the earliest, excelled on the battlefield, or were gifted with superior religious knowledge, from the masses.⁷¹ The final Sunnī solution to the problem of the intra-*ṣaḥāba* violence was the utilization of these men and women strictly for the purpose of *ḥadīth* transmission. The example, par excellence, of this solution is Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, which includes at least one *ḥadīth* from over seven hundred *ṣaḥāba* as well as a substantial number of reports from thirty-two of them who were found on all sides of the earliest intra-Muslim

⁶⁹ The primary sources for the position of the Baghdādī Muʿtazila are Abū Jaʿfar al-Iskafī's (d. 240/854–5) refutation of al-Jāhiz's *al-Uthmāniyya*, his son's book *al-Miʾyār wa l-muwāzana*, and an important section of Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd's *Sharḥ naḥj al-balāgha*. The best introduction to the Zaydī position is Etan Kohlberg, "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," *BSOAS*, 39/1 (1976), 91–8.

⁷⁰ The *ṣaḥāba* who receive sub-chapters (*abwāb*) in both *Ṣaḥīḥs* and the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba are (in alphabetical order): Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, Abū ʿUbayda b. al-Jarrāḥ, ʿĀʾisha bint Abī Bakr, Fāṭima bint Rasūl Allāh, al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, Ibn ʿAbbās, Ibn Masʿūd, Ibn ʿUmar, Jaʿfar b. Abī Ṭālib, Jarīr b. ʿAbdullāh, Khadija bint Khuwaylid, Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Saʿd b. Muʾadh, Ṭalḥa b. ʿUbayd Allāh, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, Usāma b. Zayd, Uthmān b. ʿAffān, and al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām.

⁷¹ Ibn Saʿd's book also includes what may be the earliest definition of the term *ṣaḥābī*, which he attributes to his teacher al-Wāqidī; this definition is discussed in chapter VI.4.2.

conflicts. The very structure of this massive book could only affirm the Sunnī principle of the collective authority of the *ṣaḥāba* in a most tangible manner. My study of these three approaches to the *ṣaḥāba* in the Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature indicates that the belief in the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* was arrived at gradually by the articulators of Sunnism over the third/ninth century, and that books such as *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* and the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal played a greater role in its ultimate adoption than the chapters devoted to the Companions' virtues in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

The second pillar upon which Sunnism was constructed was, in my opinion, the discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism. I examine the absolute and relative grades employed by Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal in the seventh chapter, where I uncover both individual styles of criticism as well as an overwhelming consensus regarding the reliability (or lack thereof) of over two hundred *ḥadīth*-transmitters. This chapter is of particular significance because it is the first systematic comparative study of the opinions of *ḥadīth* critics who were contemporaries of one another and reveals the vivacity of this discipline on the eve of the journeys of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

The eighth, and final, chapter articulates the implicit historical vision as to how reports of the Prophet Muḥammad's utterances and actions were transmitted across five generations, from the *ṣaḥāba* to the teachers of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal. This chapter makes particularly fruitful use of Ibn Sa'd's unique *quantitative* grades for several hundred transmitters, information which leads to the discovery of the major shift of the "capital" of *ḥadīth* scholarship from Medina to Basra and Kufa during the mid-second/eighth century. While the discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism distinguished clearly the reliable scholars found in the *isnāds* of thousands of *ḥadīth* that were ultimately systematized by Sunnī compilers of the third/ninth century, the historical vision implicit in the works of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal identified the networks of the most prominent *authorities*, all of whose materials served as major components of the most influential books of Sunnī Islam.

I.5 Conclusion

The goal of this book is to analyze the origins of the Sunnī articulation of Islam from the angle of the vast Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature. I have proposed, on the basis of a close reading of major works by al-Dhahabī, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, that Sunnism was premised initially upon three fundamental principles. The first of these was the collective authority of the *ṣaḥāba*, several of whom who, despite their bitter internal struggles during the first thirty years after the Prophet's death, played an indispensable role in the core Sunnī venture of *ḥadīth* transmission. The second principle was the methodology of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism that, coupled with a high degree of consensus as to the identities of the most reliable transmitters of the first two centuries of Islam, divided the community of transmitters into those whose reports were acceptable, those whose reports were questionable, and those whose material had to be abandoned. The third, and final, principle was the implicit historical narrative behind the five-generation journey of *ḥadīth* from the *ṣaḥāba* to the compilers of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal that unfolded in the cities of Medina, Basra, Kufa, Baghdad, and Mecca. I argue that these three basic principles explain not only the unparalleled success of the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, but, even more importantly, established a minimal set of requirements for an individual's self-identification as a Sunnī Muslim and that, in turn, may be responsible for the extraordinary popularity of Sunnī Islam over the ages.

PART ONE

THE CONSTRUCTION OF CONCEPTUAL AND
HISTORICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR INQUIRY

CHAPTER TWO

TOWARDS AN INITIAL FRAMEWORK: THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IBN AL-ŞALĀḤ AND AL-DHAHABĪ

II.1

Western studies of *ḥadīth* have neglected to unravel the fundamental conceptual and historical frameworks employed by classical Muslim scholars proficient in this discipline. European Scholars such as Joseph Schacht and, in particular, G.H.A. Juynboll, have developed an array of esoteric terms and diagrams for *ḥadīth* analysis without seriously investigating how Muslim scholars themselves understood the development of this vast literature.¹ Studies on the *ḥadīth* disciplines (*ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*) are few and far between,² and I am unaware of anyone who has attempted to sketch the history of the development of the *ḥadīth* literature from the death of Muḥammad to its florescence in the Mamlūk era. Although the purpose of this book is to demonstrate the significant role played by the third/ninth century *ḥadīth* scholars in the articulation of Sunnī Islam, it is necessary to begin this inquiry at the *end* of the classical period of *ḥadīth* compilation in order to assemble the requisite conceptual and historical tools so that we can assess accurately the relative importance of the generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal in the greater seven-century venture of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship.

¹ Schacht's contribution to this discourse is his common-link theory, which he believed could be used to identify the 'inventor' of a *ḥadīth*. Juynboll expanded upon this concept and invented such concepts as "partial-common links," "diving *isnāds*," and "spiders." For a critical review of both Schacht's and Juynboll's concepts of *isnād* analysis, see Motzki, "Quo vadis *Hadīth*-Forschung?" See below in chapter eight for an alternative narrative to the insufficient and inaccurate description of the historical development of *ḥadīth* put forth by Juynboll in his book *Muslim Tradition*, 39-76.

² An exception to this state of affairs is Robson's translation of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's brief treatise *An Introduction to the Science of Tradition, being al-Madkhal ilā maʿrifat al-Iklīl by Al Ḥākim Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh al Naysābūrī* (London, 1953).

II.2 The Conceptual Framework: Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ and his articulation of the ḥadīth disciplines

The Sunnī Islamic tradition of the classification of the disciplines of ḥadīth (*ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*) is the logical source for the establishment of a conceptual framework for ḥadīth studies. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's (d. 643/1245) famous book on this topic is the culmination of the efforts of a coterie of scholars who devoted themselves to the systematic explanation of the skills one must have in order to evaluate the qualities of individual ḥadīth. The earliest treatise on this topic is the introduction to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874), which both defends the practice of ranking ḥadīth-transmitters and proposes a tripartite division of these men into 1) those who are free from defects and controversy, and rich in expertise (*itqān*); 2) those who transmit on the authority of less- than-reliable scholars; 3) those who are accused by most scholars of being suspect (*munkar*).³ Although this short text is a statement of methodology rather than a treatise of ḥadīth disciplines, it represents the earliest conceptual approach to the compilation of ḥadīth by an actual compiler.⁴

The master ḥadīth scholar Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1448) lists only six significant precursors in the field of "the conventions of the People of ḥadīth" (*iṣṭilāḥ ahl al-ḥadīth*) prior to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddima*:⁵ al-Muḥaddith al-fāsil of Abū Muḥammad al-Rāmḥurmuzī (d. 360/971), al-Ma'rifa fī 'ulūm al-ḥadīth of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014), a work by Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī (d. 430/1039), a plethora of

³ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 49–56. The passages describing these three categories are translated and discussed in Tarif Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge, 1994), 41. The entire introduction has been translated by G. H. A. Juynboll in "Muslim's Introduction to His *Ṣaḥīḥ*."

⁴ It is possible that Ibn Sa'd's *al-Tabaqāt al-kabīr* is the earliest conceptualization of the disciplines pertaining to the history of ḥadīth transmission, and this book is credited with being an authoritative work in both categories 63 (*ṭabaqāt* of scholars) and 65 (homelands of transmitters and their places of residence) in *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* (pp. 665–7 and pp. 672–6, respectively). Al-Shāfi'ī's *Risāla* also contains a somewhat lengthy chapter that focuses on contradictory ḥadīth and employs several technical terms in its discussion of this material; see Majid Khadduri, *al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Idris al-Shāfi'ī's al-Risāla fī uṣūl al-fiqh: Treatise on the Foundations of Islamic Jurisprudence*, second edition (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1987), 179–285. The dating of al-Shāfi'ī's *Risāla* has generated some controversy in the Western academy; for a very brief discussion of this controversy, see Christopher Melchert, "Traditionist-Jurisprudents and the Framing of Islamic Law," *Islamic Law and Society* 8.3 (2001), 394. Al-Shāfi'ī's role in ḥadīth criticism is explored below in chapter IV.5.

⁵ *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 11–2 (editor's introduction).

books by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), *al-Ilmā'* of al-Qaḍī 'Iyād (d. 544/1149), and a pamphlet (*juʿz*) by Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Mayānījī (d. 580/1184). The book of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī consists of 52 categories (*naw'*) and seems to have provided Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ with both the terminology and structure for his sixty-five category book.⁶ The book *al-Kifāya fī 'ilm al-riwāya* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī also deserves special mention, as it packed with minute details concerning ḥadīth transmission and is cited extensively in the *Muqaddima*.⁷ Despite the importance of these two works, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's book not only eclipsed all previous efforts towards the classification of the ḥadīth disciplines, but has remained unsurpassed, and enormously influential, in the field to this day.

Taqī al-Dīn Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān b. al-Ṣalāḥ al-Shahrazūrī al-Kurdī was born in 577/1181–2 in the village of Sharakhān near Shahrazūr in Irbil.⁸ His father was an important scholar in Shāfi'ī law in the region, and the two of them traveled extensively in order to acquire religious knowledge. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ is of particular importance for ḥadīth scholarship because he was one of the last scholars to study with the masters of this discipline in Nishapur, Marw, and Qazvin prior to the Mongol irruption of 616–7/1220–1 that severed these Eastern cities from the central lands of Egypt and Syria.⁹ His transmission of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and the enormous *Sunan* of al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) appears to have been especially valuable to his numerous students. Both Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ and his father came to

⁶ Thirty-six of al-Ḥākim's categories can be found almost verbatim in the Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's text. It should be remarked that the latter work feels far more polished than the former, and the categories are more carefully arranged from a thematic perspective.

⁷ The editor of the *Muqaddima* has tracked down many of the citations of al-Khaṭīb taken from *al-Kifāya*. Many monographs of al-Khaṭīb are also mentioned in *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, such as *al-Faṣl bi-l-waṣl al-mudraj fī l-naql*, *al-Muttafiq wa l-mukhtalif*, *Kitāb talkhīṣ al-mulashābih fī l-rasm*, and *al-Mubhamāt*; *ibid.*, 278, 613, 622, and 637.

⁸ 'Ā'isha 'Abd al-Rahmān has provided a useful biography of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ on the basis of myriad biographical dictionaries in the introduction to her edition of *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* (pp. 14–38). Al-Dhahabī classifies him as 'Shaykh al-Islām' in the eighteenth *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, IV, 149. The biography in *Wafayāt al-a'yān* (#411) is particularly valuable because Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282) was a student of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ for a year; see *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, III (Beirut, 1998), 213–5. See also J. Robson, "Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ," *EI2*, III, 927.

⁹ These master teachers include: al-Mu'ayyad al-Ṭūsī (d. 617/1220), Manṣūr b. 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Farāwī (d. 608/1211–2), and Zaynab al-Sha'riyya in Nishapur; Abū l-Muẓaffar 'Abd al-Rahīm b. al-Sam'ānī (d. 617/1220) in Marw; and Abū l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad (d. 617/1220) in Qazvin; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 17–19 and al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, IV, 149.

Syria prior to 616/1219, and his father accepted a teaching position at the Asadiyya *madrasa* (college) in Aleppo where he remained until his death in 618/1222. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ acquired teaching positions at three *madrasas*, including the Ashrafiyya (opened 630/1233), in the Damascus area, and was renowned for his knowledge of *ḥadīth* and Shāfiʿī jurisprudence. It appears that he composed and taught the *Muqaddima*, as well as his commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and a history of Shāfiʿī jurists, during this last phase of his life.¹⁰

A brief survey of the works of scholars who thrived during the two centuries following Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ illustrates how his *Muqaddima* became the 'canonical' work of Sunnī *ḥadīth* disciplines. ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān lists no fewer than seventeen abridgements of, commentaries on, and supplements to the *Muqaddima* by Mamlūk-era scholars in the useful introduction to her critical edition of this text.¹¹ Several particularly noteworthy books among this list include *al-Taqrīb wa-l-taysīr li-maʿrifat sunan al-bashīr al-nadhīr* of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's famous student Muḥyī l-Dīn al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), the *Iṣlāḥ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* by Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), the one thousand verse poem of al-Zayn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806/1403–4), *Maḥāsīn al-Iṣṭilāḥ* by al-Sirāj al-Bulqīnī (d. 805/1402–3),¹² *Nukat ʿalā Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ* by Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1448), and *Tadrīb al-Rāwī* of al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505). In fact, it is difficult to find any major Mamlūk-era work concerned with the *ḥadīth* disciplines that does not follow the sixty-five category scheme of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ other than the noteworthy exceptions of Ibn Daqīq al-ʿId's (d. 702/1303) *al-Iqtirāḥ fī bayān al-iṣṭilāḥ*¹³ and Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 728/1328) *ʿIlm al-ḥadīth*.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's short commentary on Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* has been published as *Ṣiḥḥat Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut, 1987).

¹¹ *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 52–62.

¹² This text is included in the lower half of ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's edition of *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*.

¹³ This book is mentioned by ʿĀʾisha ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (p. 62) and was abridged by al-Dhahabī in *al-Mūqīza*, a text we shall be examining in the next section of this chapter. Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Manfalūṭī al-Mālikī wa l-Shāfiʿī, known as Ibn Daqīq al-ʿId, is considered by al-Dhahabī to be both a Shaykh al-Islām and a *mujtahid*; *Tadhkira*, IV, 181. His book was published in 1982 in Baghdad. It is divided into the following 9 chapters: 1) technical terms, 2) proper transmission techniques and etiquettes, 3) etiquettes of the transmitter, 4) etiquettes of writing *ḥadīth*, 5) knowledge of elevated (*al-ʿālī*) and denigrated (*al-nāzil*) *ḥadīth* (explained below), 6) more technical terms of *ḥadīth* transmission, 7) reliable transmitters (*al-thiqāt*), 8) unreliable transmitters (*al-dūʿafāʾ*), 9) correct orthography (*al-mukhtalif wa-l-muʿtalif*).

¹⁴ This book was published in 1984 in Cairo. Although the bulk of it (pp. 185–493)

What are the sixty-five disciplines of *ḥadīth* that Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ authoritatively articulated in his *Muqaddima* over 750 years ago? I have grouped these categories into five broad self-explanatory themes that can be seen below. Most Arabic technical terms have been left untranslated and are explained in the footnotes; numbers in italics indicate the congruous chapters in al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's *al-Maʿrifā fī ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| I. Grades of <i>ḥadīth</i> | <i>Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ</i> | <i>al-Ḥākim</i> |
| A. <i>al-ṣaḥīḥ</i> (sound, authoritative) ¹⁵ | (1) | (19) |
| B. <i>al-ḥasan</i> (satisfactory) ¹⁶ | (2) | |
| C. <i>al-dāʿif</i> (weak, unauthoritative) ¹⁷ | (3) | |
| II. Types of <i>ḥadīth</i> according to <i>isnād</i> | | |
| A. <i>al-musnad</i> ¹⁸ | | (4) |

explores the meanings and variants of roughly twenty famous *ḥadīth*, there are some interesting theoretical discussions, such as the categories of *ḥadīth* (pp. 77–83) and the distinction between storytellers (*qasṣās*) and *ḥadīth*-transmitters (pp. 493–518), that shed light on the views of this influential scholar.

¹⁵ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ provides the following succinct definition of the term *ṣaḥīḥ*: a *ḥadīth* with an unbroken *isnād* that ends at the Prophet in which all of the transmitters are reliable and precise and that is neither a unique transmission nor defective (*al-ḥadīthu al-musnadu llādhi yattasilu isnāduhu bi-naqli l-ʿadli l-dābiḥi ʿan al-ʿadli l-dābiḥi ilā muntahāhu wa lā yakūnu shādhḍhan wa lā muʿallalan*); *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 151. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ states explicitly that the two most sound books after the Qurʾān are the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and argues emphatically that the sum of *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* is not exhausted by the several thousand *ḥadīth* found within these two books but includes reports found in later works, such as al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's *Mustadrak*; *ibid.*, 160–4.

¹⁶ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ struggles to harmonize the incomplete definitions of this type of *ḥadīth* proposed by al-Khaṭṭābī and al-Tirmidhī: a) a *ḥadīth* whose *isnād* is not free from men whose precise integrity is concealed (*mastūr*) and cannot be verified, although they are not known for serious lapses of memory, numerous errors, or receiving accusations of mendacity; b) a *ḥadīth* that is neither unique (*shādhḍhan wa munkar*) nor defective (*muʿallal*), and whose *isnād* is complete with men of known integrity, but who are not at the level of the transmitters found in the authoritative books due to shortcomings of memory (*hifẓ*) and expertise (*uqūn*); *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 175–6. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ mentions that this term was employed most frequently by al-Tirmidhī in his *Sunan*, and also endeavors to solve this compiler's use of the problematic term *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* with the explanation that al-Tirmidhī probably knew of two *isnāds* for *ḥadīth* which receive this evaluation, one of which was *ḥasan*, and the other of which was *ṣaḥīḥ*. He also reports an anonymous opinion that the term *ḥasan* in these cases is not a technical term but merely means "that to which the soul inclines and the heart does not disdain," *mā tamīlu ilayhi l-naḥsu wa lā yaʿbāhu l-qalbu*; *ibid.*, 180 and 185.

¹⁷ Any *ḥadīth* that is neither *ṣaḥīḥ* nor *ḥasan*; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 188.

¹⁸ An unbroken *isnād* that ends at the Prophet (*marfūʿ* and *muttaṣīl*); for Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, it is any *isnād* that starts with the Prophet; for al-Khaṭṭābī, it is any unbroken *isnād*; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 190.

B. <i>al-muttaṣil</i> ¹⁹	(5)	
C. <i>al-marfū</i> ²⁰	(6)	
D. <i>al-mawqūf</i> ²¹	(7)	(5)
E. <i>al-maqtū</i> ²²	(8)	(6)
F. <i>al-mursal</i> ²³	(9)	(8)
G. <i>al-munqaṭi</i> ²⁴	(10)	(9)
H. <i>al-muḍḍal</i> ²⁵	(11)	(12)
I. <i>al-tadlīs</i> ²⁶	(12)	(26)
J. <i>al-isnād al-ʿālī wa l-nāzil</i> ²⁷	(29)	(1,2)
K. <i>al-musalsal</i> ²⁸	(33)	(10)

III. Types of *ḥadīth* according to *matn* and/or *isnād*

A. <i>al-shādhḍ wa al-matrūk</i> ²⁹	(13)	(28)
B. <i>al-munkar</i> ³⁰	(14)	
C. <i>al-afrād/al-mufrad</i> ³¹	(17)	(25)
D. <i>al-muʿallal</i> ³²	(18)	(27)

¹⁹ An *isnād* in which every transmitter could have heard the text (*matn*) from the previous one.

²⁰ An *isnād* that ends at the Prophet Muḥammad.

²¹ An *isnād* that ends at a *ṣaḥābī* and whose *matn* does not include a Prophetic act or locution.

²² An *isnād* that ends at a *tābiʿī* and reports his or her act or locution.

²³ An *isnād* that ends at the Prophet and lacks a *ṣaḥābī*.

²⁴ An *isnād* in which any two adjacent transmitters could not possibly have met; an *isnād* with a lacuna.

²⁵ An *isnād* with a lacuna of two or more generations between transmitters.

²⁶ Two types: 1) the act of transmitting a *ḥadīth* from a contemporary from whom one did not actually hear the report; 2) the use of an obscure name in order to camouflage the presence of an unreliable transmitter in the *isnād*.

²⁷ Five types of *al-ʿālī*: 1) *isnād* with the lowest number of transmitters; 2) *isnād* containing an imām of *ḥadīth*; 3) presence of a transmission (*riwāya*) in one of the "Five Books" (al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāʾī); 4) *isnād* with the longest-lived member of a particular generation of transmitters; 5) *isnād* with the earliest date among contemporaries of transmission from a teacher. The *ḥadīth al-nāzil* is considered to be the opposite of each of these five categories; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 437–49.

²⁸ An *isnād* with a feature common to all transmitters; for example, all of the transmitters are Kufans.

²⁹ A unique transmission from a reliable transmitter; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ divides this topic into four categories: 1) If it is unique and contradicts the reports from better transmitters, it is rejected; 2) if it is not contradicted and the transmitter is reliable, it might be *ṣaḥīḥ*; 3) if it is not contradicted and the transmitter is mediocre, it is *ḥasan*; 4) if the transmitter is unacceptable (*munkar*), it is rejected; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 237–43.

³⁰ A transmission with a unique *matn*; same four categories as *shādhḍ* (#13).

³¹ A unique transmission from the perspective of all transmitters (*shādhḍ* or *munkar*) or just those of a certain region

³² Any defect in a *ḥadīth*, whether the *isnād* or *matn*.

E. <i>al-muḍṭarib</i> ³³	(19)	
F. <i>al-mudraj</i> ³⁴	(20)	(13)
G. <i>al-mawḍūʿ</i> (fabricated <i>ḥadīth</i>)	(21)	
H. <i>al-maqlūb</i> ³⁵	(22)	
I. <i>al-mashhūr</i> and <i>al-mutawātir</i> ³⁶	(30)	(23)
J. <i>al-gharīb wa l-ʿazīz</i> ³⁷	(31)	(24)
K. <i>gharīb al-alfāz</i> ³⁸	(32)	(22)

IV. Arts and techniques of *ḥadīth* transmission

A. <i>Isnād</i> examination	(15)	
B. Recognition of textual additions to a <i>ḥadīth</i> made by trustworthy transmitters	(16)	(16)
C. <i>Ḥadīth</i> -transmitter criticism	(23)	(18)

³³ The weaker of two variants of the same *ḥadīth*.

³⁴ Erroneous inclusion or confusion of words or names; three types 1) explanatory word by a later transmitter is included in the locution of the Prophet; 2) two *matns*, each having its own *isnād*, are transmitted with only one *isnād*; 3) a *ḥadīth* heard from different groups with variants is transmitted as if there was consensus upon its wording or *isnād*; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 274–78.

³⁵ Inversion of *isnāds* with the incorrect *matns*; Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ also makes three important statements concerning this category: 1) The *matn* of a *ḥadīth* might be *ṣaḥīḥ* even if the *isnād* is weak; 2) It is permissible, according to the *ahl al-ḥadīth*, to be less stringent with *isnāds* for *ḥadīth* that do not concern the attributes of God and divine Law (*ṣifāt Allāh taʿālā wa aḥkām al-sharʿa min al-ḥalāl wa l-ḥarām*); 3) If one quotes a weak *ḥadīth*, one must say something to the effect that "it was reported on the authority of the Messenger of God ﷺ" (*ruwiya ʿan rasūl Allāh ﷺ*) rather than "the Messenger of God said" (*qāla rasūl Allāh*); *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 286–7.

³⁶ *Mashhūr* is a term employed only by the *ḥadīth* transmitters that refers to multiple transmissions of the same *matn*. *Mutawātir* is a term used by the jurists that refers to a *matn* for which multiple transmitters at each stage of the *isnād* exist. Since most *ḥadīth* trace back through only one or two *ṣaḥāba* or *tābiʿūn*, the challenge is to find those *ḥadīth* which, for example, twenty or more *ṣaḥāba* transmitted. The fact that very few *ḥadīth* fulfill this rigorous stipulation has led Wael Hallaq recently to the conclusion that most Muslim experts of legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) allowed for the possibility that the vast majority of the *ḥadīth* were not authentic centuries prior to the arguments of Orientalists such as Goldziher and Schacht. Hallaq's argument is convincing from the perspective of the legal theorists, but, given the situation that few legal theorists are recorded as being experts of *ḥadīth* criticism, it seems as though he may have fallen in the same trap as Schacht, namely making vast generalizations about the *ḥadīth* on the basis of literature external to the scholarly tradition of the *ḥadīth* scholars; see Wael Hallaq, "The Authenticity of Prophetic *Ḥadīth*: a Pseudo-problem," *Studia Islamica*, 89 (1999), 75–90.

³⁷ If a *ḥadīth* has a unique *matn* or *isnād* from a famous transmitter, it is *gharīb*; if there are two or three versions of it, it is *ʿazīz*; otherwise it is *mashhūr*. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ warns that the majority of *gharīb ḥadīth* are not authoritative (*ghayr ṣaḥīḥ*) and quotes Ibn Ḥanbal as urging students not to write them down for this reason; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 456.

³⁸ The presence of an obscure word in the *matn* of a *ḥadīth*.

D. Proper method for <i>ḥadīth</i> acquisition	(24)	
E. Writing <i>ḥadīth</i>	(25)	
F. Correct transmission (<i>riwāya</i>)	(26)	
G. Etiquettes of the <i>ḥadīth</i> -transmitter	(27)	
H. Etiquettes of the student	(28)	
I. Abrogation	(34)	(21)
J. Orthography (<i>tashīf</i>)	(35)	(34–35)
K. Differences (<i>mukhtalif</i>) between <i>ḥadīth</i>	(36)	(30)
L. Erroneous additions to <i>isnāds</i>	(37)	
M. Hidden <i>marāsīl</i>	(38)	
V. <i>Isnād</i> Criticism (<i>‘ilm al-rijāl</i>)		
A. <i>Classes of Transmitters</i>		
1) <i>al-ṣaḥāba</i> (singular: <i>ṣaḥābī</i>) ³⁹	(39)	(7)
2) <i>al-tābi‘ūn</i> (singular: <i>tābi‘ī</i>) ⁴⁰	(40)	(14)
3) <i>al-thiqāt</i> and <i>al-ḍu‘afā’</i> ⁴¹	(61)	
4) <i>al-thiqāt</i> who made errors in old age	(62)	
5) <i>ṭabaqāt</i> of scholars ⁴²	(63)	
B. <i>Types of Transmission</i>		
1) Transmission of senior transmitters from their juniors	(41)	
2) Transmission from scholars of the same generation	(42)	
3) Brothers and sisters who are <i>ḥadīth</i> transmitters	(43)	(36)
4) Transmission from sons to their fathers	(44)	
5) Transmission from fathers to their sons	(45)	
6) Two scholars whose death dates are distant who transmit <i>ḥadīth</i> from the same teacher ⁴³	(46)	
7) Transmitters from whom only one student transmitted <i>ḥadīth</i>	(47)	(37)

³⁹ Any Muslim who saw the Prophet Muḥammad; often translated as “Companions.”

⁴⁰ Any Muslim who saw or heard from a *ṣaḥābī*; often translated as “Successors.”

⁴¹ Reliable and unreliable (literally “weak”) transmitters.

⁴² Classes or generations of people, depending on the context. This topic is discussed thoroughly in the next section of this chapter.

⁴³ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ explains that this discipline is useful for identifying elevated *isnāds*

C. <i>Disciplines of Names</i>		
1) Transmitters who are known by multiple names	(48)	(40)
2) Unique names, <i>kunyas</i> (agnates), and honorifics	(49)	
3) Names and their <i>kunyas</i>	(50)	(41)
4) <i>Kunyas</i> of those who are known by names	(51)	
5) Honorifics of <i>ḥadīth</i> transmitters	(52)	(45)
6) Consensus and disagreement over names, <i>kunyas</i> and honorifics (<i>al-mu’talif wa l-mukhtalif</i>)	(53)	
7) Consensus and disagreement over names and lineages (<i>ansāb</i>)	(54)	(39)
8) <i>Mutashābih</i> (combination of 6 and 7)	(55)	(47)
9) Bearers of the same name and lineage (<i>nasab</i>)	(56)	
10) Those whose <i>nasab</i> is not their father’s name	(57)	
11) Deceptive lineages	(58)	
12) Unclear male and female transmitters	(59)	
13) <i>Mawālī</i> and those affiliated with a tribe	(64)	(38, 43)
D. <i>Time and Space</i>		
1) Important birth and death dates and travels of transmitters	(60)	(44)
2) Origins of transmitters and their places of residence	(65)	(42)

The purpose of this excursus through all sixty-five disciplines of *ḥadīth* is to demonstrate the fundamental roles of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and the broader categories of *isnād* criticism (*‘ilm al-rijāl*) in the tradition of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship. Twenty-six of the categories

and gives the example of Mālik b. Anas, from whom both al-Zuhrī and Zakariyyā b. Durayd al-Kindī transmitted *ḥadīth*. These latter two men died at least 137 years apart from one another; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 550–1. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ reports that al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī has an entire book devoted to this topic titled *Kuṭāb al-sābiq wa l-lāhiq*.

consist of pure biographical information of transmitters, ranging from the type of knowledge that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal is actually the grandson of Ḥanbal and the son of Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal (category 57), to the knowledge of the contemporaries of each individual scholar (#63). All twenty-two disciplines of the “Types of *ḥadīth* according to *isnād*” and “Types of *ḥadīth* according to *matn* and/or *isnād*” require a high degree of familiarity with the qualities and lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of *ḥadīth*-transmitters.⁴⁴ It is not possible to answer even the most basic question—is this *ḥadīth* authoritative (*ṣaḥīḥ*)?—without substantial prosopographical knowledge. While the intellectual and cultural significance of the *isnād* and knowledge of the names found within it has been acknowledged by several astute scholars, such as Tarif Khalidi, an enormous amount of research remains to be done into the lives and reputations of a significant number of *ḥadīth* transmitters of the formative period of Islam.⁴⁵

A few of these categories merit closer examination because of their role in shaping the topics of investigation in this book. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ identifies whom he deems to be the masters of the tradition of *ḥadīth* scholarship and even outlines a curriculum for the aspiring student of *ḥadīth* in his *Muqaddima*. Category 60, “Important birth and death dates of transmitters,” includes the names and dates of the Prophet Muḥammad, the ten *ṣaḥāba* promised paradise,⁴⁶ two *ṣaḥāba* who lived both prior to and after the advent of Islam,⁴⁷ five founders of

⁴⁴ The greatest skill that, in Mamlūk times at least, distinguished a ‘master *ḥadīth* scholar’ (*muḥaddith*) from a ‘jurist *ḥadīth* scholar’ (*muḥaddith al-fuqahā*) was the ability to identify the ‘elevated’ *isnād* (*al-‘ālī*; category 29) of any particular *matn* that had multiple chains of transmission. This skill was entirely dependent upon an exhaustive knowledge of the relative qualities and reputations of hundreds of *ḥadīth* transmitters. That this skill was not considered by everyone to be necessary in order to achieve the rank of ‘master *ḥadīth* scholar’ can be seen in al-Suyūṭī’s defense of Ibn Kathīr, whom Ibn Ḥajar criticized as being merely a ‘jurist *ḥadīth* scholar’ because he lacked the skill to identify the ‘elevated’ *isnāds*. Al-Suyūṭī claims that this skill is not a prerequisite for the attainment of the title of *muḥaddith*; see his *Dhayl* included in the 1998 edition al-Dhahabī’s *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, V, 238–9.

⁴⁵ Khalidi discusses the cultural impact of the *isnād* in the context of his description as to how the Islamic historical tradition grew out of the tradition of *ḥadīth* compilation. He declares the *isnād* to be “a unique product of Islamic culture” and suggests that its natural growth served as a catalyst for the compilation of books; Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 17–28.

⁴⁶ Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh (d. 36/656), al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām (d. 36/656), Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ (d. 55/675), Sa’d b. Zayd (d. 50–1/670–1), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (d. 32/652–3), Abū ‘Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 18/640).

⁴⁷ Ḥākim b. Ḥizām (d. 54/674) and Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 54/674).

legal schools (*madhāhib*),⁴⁸ the compilers of the five ‘canonical’ *ḥadīth* books,⁴⁹ and seven later scholars who produced useful books concerning *ḥadīth*.⁵⁰ This last group of men is particularly interesting because it covers the first two-thirds of the three-hundred year gap between the last of the five ‘canonical’ compilers, namely al-Nasā’ī (d. 303/915), and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, and, at the same time, raises the question as to what took place during the century prior to the birth of the author of the *Muqaddima*.

The reading list for the aspiring student of *ḥadīth* described by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ in category 28 confirms the importance of the genre of books devoted to the study of *ḥadīth*-transmitters that I study in the second half of this book.⁵¹ This list suggests that the student should begin with the five ‘canonical’ *ḥadīth* collections prior to advancing to the *musnad* works, such as the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, and books that contain a mixture of *ḥadīth* and reports of the *ṣaḥāba* and *tābi‘ūn*, such as the *Muwaṭṭa’* of Mālik b. Anas. The next stage of pedagogy involves works that uncover defects (*‘ilal*) in *ḥadīth*, and the works of Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Dāraquṭnī are explicitly mentioned.⁵² Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ then urges the student of *ḥadīth* to study the histories of *ḥadīth*-transmitters in general, and *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* of al-Bukhārī and *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta’dīl* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim in particular. The final category of books that merits attention is the one concerned with accurate orthography of names, such as the *Ikmāl* of Abū Naṣr Ibn Mākūlā.⁵³ This list not

⁴⁸ Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778), Mālik b. Anas (d. 179/795), Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), al-Shāfi‘ī (d. 204/820), Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855).

⁴⁹ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ does not consider the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja to be of the same caliber of the other five ‘canonical’ books mentioned in the previous chapter (note 35). The expression “the six books” (*al-kutub al-sitta*) does not appear to have gained widespread currency until the century after his death.

⁵⁰ Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Dāraquṭnī (306–385/918–995), Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (321–405/933–1014), ‘Abd al-Ghanī b. Sa’d al-Miṣrī (332–409/944–1018), Abū Nu‘aym Aḥmad b. ‘Abdullāh al-Iṣbahānī (334–430/946–1039), Abū ‘Umar Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Barr al-Namarī (368–463/979–1071), Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (384–458/994–1066), and Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (391–463/1001–1071).

⁵¹ This list is derived from *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 432–3.

⁵² Various recensions of the *‘ilal* works of Ibn Ḥanbal have been published in the past decade and can be found in the bibliography. The previously mentioned encyclopedia of his opinions appears to be a useful alternative to these cumbersome and chaotic *‘ilal* books. The *‘ilal* book of al-Dāraquṭnī was published by Dār Taybah in Riyadh in 1984 under the title of *al-‘Ilal al-wārīda fī l-aḥādīth al-Nabawiyya*. See also Fuat Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 207.

⁵³ There is much uncertainty concerning Ibn Mākūlā’s death date; the numbers range from 475/1082–3 to 486/1092–3.

only emphasizes the obligation of the student of *ḥadīth* to devote serious study to the biographies of thousands of *ḥadīth* transmitters, but also reaffirms the value of several third/ninth and fourth/tenth century books for this task.

Another discipline of critical importance for the understanding of how the Sunnis articulated their vision of Islam is the knowledge of the *ṣaḥāba*.⁵⁴ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ divides this category into the following seven sub-topics:

- 1) Who is a *ṣaḥābī*?
- 2) The universal probity (*ʿadāla*) of the *ṣaḥāba*;
- 3) The *ṣaḥāba* with the greatest number of transmissions;
- 4) The number of *ṣaḥāba* who transmitted *ḥadīth*;
- 5) Rankings of the *ṣaḥāba* according to excellence;
- 6) Who was the first *ṣaḥābī* to embrace Islam?
- 7) The last *ṣaḥābī* to die in each of the major cities.

Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ identifies Abū Hurayra as the *ṣaḥābī* with the largest amount of *ḥadīth* transmissions and quotes Ibn Ḥanbal's identification of six *ṣaḥāba* who excelled quantitatively in *ḥadīth* transmission and lived to a ripe old age.⁵⁵ Three other early Iraqi opinions are also cited on this topic. The first is the Basran 'Alī b. al-Madīnī (d. 234/849), who praises the juridical contributions (*fiqh*) of Ibn Mas'ūd, Zayd b. Thābit, and Ibn 'Abbās. The Kufan *tābiʿī* Masrūq b. al-Ajda' (d. 63/683)⁵⁶ identifies six great *ṣaḥāba*⁵⁷ and then reduces this list to just 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and Ibn Mas'ūd. Finally, the Kufan *tābiʿī* al-Sha'bī (d. after 100/718)⁵⁸ lists two groups of three *ṣaḥāba* each as the sources of religious knowledge (*ʿilm*).⁵⁹ These reports offer

⁵⁴ Category 39, *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 485–505.

⁵⁵ These six *ṣaḥāba* are Abū Hurayra, Ibn 'Umar, 'Ā'isha, Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, Ibn 'Abbās, and Anas b. Mālīk.

⁵⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VI, 398; al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, I, 40.

⁵⁷ 'Umar, 'Alī, Ubayy, Zayd b. Thābit, Abū l-Dardā, Ibn Mas'ūd.

⁵⁸ His name is 'Āmir b. Sharāḥīl al-Hamdānī; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VI, 479 and *Tadhkira*, I, 63. Neither Ibn Sa'd nor al-Dhahabī give his death date. Ibn Qutayba puts it at 105 or 4, whereas Ibn Hajar merely says he died after 100; see Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif*, ed. Tharwa 'Akāsha (Cairo, 1960), 449 and Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib*, 230.

⁵⁹ The first group consists of 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd, and Zayd b. Thābit and the latter of 'Alī, Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī, and Ubayy b. Ka'b. Al-Sha'bī states that "the knowledge of some of them [in each group] resembles that of others, and they shared knowledge freely from among themselves" (*yushbihu 'ilmu ba'dihim ba'dan, wa kāna yaqtabisu ba'duhum min ba'din*). These groupings are particularly interesting because

shreds of evidence of a core of what can be called 'primary *ṣaḥāba*' whose identities are further explored in chapter six of this book.

The fifth sub-topic of category 39 shatters any illusion that the *ṣaḥāba* are all qualitatively equal. The *Muqaddima* declares that Abū Bakr is unequivocally the greatest (*afḍal*) *ṣaḥābī*, and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is the second greatest.⁶⁰ The fact that master *ḥadīth* scholars, such as Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) and Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/923),⁶¹ believed that 'Alī was superior to 'Uthmān forces Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ to acknowledge that it is possible to hold this opinion despite the unanimous opinion of the *madhāhib* of 'companions of *ḥadīth*' (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*) and 'people of the *sunna*' (*ahl al-sunna*) that 'Uthmān was superior to 'Alī.⁶² Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ attempts to mitigate these polemical rankings by closing the sub-topic with 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī's (d. 429/1037) five-class structure of descending excellence:

- 1) The first four caliphs
- 2) The six remaining *ṣaḥāba* promised paradise⁶³
- 3) Those who fought at the Battle of Badr (2/624)
- 4) Those who fought at the battle of Uḥud (3/625)
- 5) Those who gave the oath of allegiance to the Prophet at Ḥudaybiyya (6/628)⁶⁴

What is clear from these two sub-topics is that the classification and ranking of the *ṣaḥāba* is a critical element of Sunnism and merits the rigorous examination it receives in chapter six of this study.

they transcend the usual divisions of geography, and they indicate the unique diversity of teachings from the *ṣaḥāba* in Kufa.

⁶⁰ This opinion can be found in eleven of the twelve Sunnī creeds translated and collated by Montgomery Watt in *Islamic Creeds: A Selection* (Edinburgh, 1994), 32, 33, 38, 44, 55, 58, 65, 72, 79, 84, 88.

⁶¹ His name is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzayma al-Naysābūrī. Al-Dhahabī praises him as 'Shaykh al-Islam' in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* (II, 207). Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ states that Sufyān al-Thawrī adopted the belief that 'Uthmān was superior to 'Alī at the end of his life; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 495.

⁶² The belief that 'Alī is superior to 'Uthmān is called *tashayyū'* and is discussed in detail in chapter VII.6. The two examples of adherents to this belief mentioned are explicitly articulated in the *Muqaddima*, and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ also observes that this is the common opinion of the *ahl al-sunna* of Kufa; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 495.

⁶³ See above, footnote 46, for a list of these ten men. Ibn Ḥanbal opens his *Musnād* with the transmissions of each of these men.

⁶⁴ This event is called *bay'at al-ridwān* and is mentioned in the Qur'ān in Sūrat al-Fatḥ (48):10, 18. Presumably there is a sixth class, as the majority of *ṣaḥāba*, including Abū Hurayra, embraced Islam after Ḥudaybiyya and prior to the Prophet's death in 11/632.

The final *ḥadīth* discipline of crucial significance for this project is the one pertaining to *ḥadīth* criticism titled "the knowledge of the attribute of one whose transmission is accepted and one whose transmission is rejected, as well as that which is affiliated with this topic pertaining to censure, unreliability, reliability, and authority."⁶⁵ This is one of the longest chapters in the *Muqaddima*, and Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ divides it into fifteen sub-topics:

- 1) Probity of the transmitter (*ʿadālat al-rāwī*)
- 2) Techniques for establishing the probity of a transmitter
- 3) Necessity of evidence for a transmitter to be classified as unreliable
- 4) Number of negative ratings necessary to be classified as unreliable
- 5) Precedence of ranking of the status of 'unreliable' to that of 'reliable'
- 6) Insufficiency of the expression *ḥaddathanī al-thiqatu* if the *thiqa* is not named in the *isnād*
- 7) Transmission of a known, reliable transmitter does not necessarily mean that the other names in the *isnād* are also reliable
- 8) Unknown transmitters (*majhūl*)
- 9) Transmitters affiliated with innovative sectarianism (*mubtadiʿ*)
- 10) Acceptance of the repentance of one who falsifies religion (*kadhīb*)⁶⁶ unless it was related to *ḥadīth*
- 11) If a transmitter forgets what he has transmitted at a later date, the *ḥadīth* is still authoritative if his students pass it on
- 12) The rejection of the transmission of any scholar who accepts compensation (*ajr*) in exchange for transmitting *ḥadīth*⁶⁷
- 13) Unacceptability of the reports of scholars who are lenient (*tasāhul*) in transmission (*samāʿ*) and who transmit many odd (*shawādh*) and suspect (*manākīr*) *ḥadīth*

⁶⁵ Category 23: *maʿrifatu ṣifati man tuqbalu riwāyatuhu wa man turaddu riwāyatuhu wa mā yataʿallaqu bi-dhālika min qadhim wa jarḥin wa tawthiqin wa taʿdīlin*; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 288–311.

⁶⁶ The word *kadhīb* literally means "lie" and is used extensively in both the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* literature in the sense of the deliberate denial and falsification of the divine truth. The classical literature on this topic is vast, and several of the scholars whose opinions are studied in chapter 4 discuss it in detail.

⁶⁷ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ reports that this is the classical opinion of the Imāms of *ḥadīth*, but that Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (whose *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ* was mentioned in the introduction) issued a *fatwā* that contradicts this opinion in the case of the scholar who teaches *ḥadīth* in order to support his family; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 305–6.

- 14) The 'modern' conditions for the acceptance of *ḥadīth* transmission⁶⁸
- 15) Technical terms of *ḥadīth* criticism.⁶⁹

The foundation of this entire pyramid of sub-topics pertaining to the verification of the reliability of *ḥadīth* transmitters is the testimony of a core of master critics whose own probity is unassailable.⁷⁰ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ cites eleven examples of these master scholars on the authority of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, but does not give any indication as to their total number.⁷¹ The opinions of these scholars carry an extraordinary amount of weight, for if one of them evaluates a transmitter as 'unreliable,' this rating must be considered for eternity (subtopics 4 and 5), and if none of them knows a transmitter, all of the *ḥadīth* in which his name appears in the *isnād* become weak (subtopic 8). This category reinforces the argument of the centrality of both *ḥadīth* criticism in the entire conceptual scheme of the *ḥadīth* disciplines, and indicates the sublime influence of a small group of impeccable master critics, whose critical opinions have been permanently etched into the Sunnī tradition of *ḥadīth* transmission. Perhaps this is why Tarif Khalidī observed that "one of the most urgent tasks for researchers in this field is the exhaustive examination of the rise and development of the critical methodologies employed by the *ḥadīth* scholars themselves."⁷²

The goal of this section has been to establish a conceptual framework for the study of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism. The *Muqaddima*

⁶⁸ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ indicates in this sub-topic that "the times have changed" in the field of *ḥadīth* transmission from the days of the earlier authorities, as the sole responsibility for the 'modern' scholar of *ḥadīth* is to find a reliable, upright teacher and become the next link in the *isnād* of the book that he is teaching. The reason for this is that "all authoritative and semi-authoritative *ḥadīth* have been collected and written in the books that the Imāms of *ḥadīth* compiled. It is not possible that anything has escaped all of them, although it is possible that it has escaped some of them . . . Anyone who brings forth a *ḥadīth* not found in any of them will not have it accepted." (*wa waḥḥu dhālika anna l-aḥādītha llaḥī qad ṣaḥḥat aw waqafat bayna l-ṣiḥḥati wa l-saqami qad duwwinat wa kutibat fī l-jawāmiʿi llaḥī jamaʿahā aʿimmatu l-ḥadīth wa lā yajūzu an yadhhaba shayʿun minhā ʿalā jamīʿihim wa in jāza an yadhhaba ʿalā baʿdihim . . . fa-man jāʿa l-yawma bi-ḥadīthin lā yūjadu ʿinda jamīʿihim lam yuqbal minhu*; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 307).

⁶⁹ This category is explored at great length in chapter seven.

⁷⁰ Literally, "overflowing" (*istifāda*).

⁷¹ These eleven men are Mālik b. Anas, Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, al-Awzāʿī, al-Layth b. Saʿd, Ibn al-Mubārak, Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ, Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Maʿīn, and ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 289. All of these critics will be encountered in chapter four; see below, Table 4.3.

⁷² Khalidī, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 27.

of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ is a useful tool for this task because it is the most authoritative articulation of the *ḥadīth* disciplines in the Sunnī tradition. The importance of *isnād* criticism is graphically illustrated by the fact that only five of the sixty-five topics do *not* rely in some measure upon a high degree of prosopographical proficiency.⁷³ The elevated status of a small group of master *ḥadīth* scholars can be ascertained from the curriculum cited in category 28 and the eleven Imāms listed in category 23.1. The radical Sunnī assertion of the unquestionable probity of all *ṣaḥāba* is clearly promoted in the *Muqaddima*, although it is tempered significantly by the identification of certain men (and one woman) of distinction in the fields of *ḥadīth* transmission, religious knowledge, and general excellence. This brief overview of the *Muqaddima* of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ clearly demonstrates the importance of the identification of the master *ḥadīth* critics, a reclassification of the *ṣaḥāba* on the basis of their individual contributions to *ḥadīth* transmission, and a thorough examination of the critical techniques employed by some of the earliest critics in order for one to understand the development of the Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature.⁷⁴

II.3 Towards a historical framework: The identification of al-Dhahabī's favorite *ḥadīth* scholars

The task of this section is to select the appropriate books from Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī's (d. 748/1348) vast corpus for the purpose of ascertaining the identities of the *ḥadīth* scholars whom he most admired. Al-Dhahabī's mastery of the two primary historiographical techniques in the Islamic tradition—*tarīkh* (annale) and *ṭabaqa* (generation)—and his preference of the latter in his works devoted exclusively to religious scholars is significant and calls for a brief examination into the nature of *ṭabaqāt* works in general. The identification of al-Dhahabī's favorite *ḥadīth* scholars is a necessary first step towards the articulation of an original seven-phase historical essay of the first seven centuries of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship that is the subject of the next chapter.

⁷³ These five topics are #24–28 and are concerned with the practical technique for the 'modern day' transmission of *ḥadīth* from the classical books.

⁷⁴ These topics are discussed below in chapters 4–8, respectively.

Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī was the youngest member of a group of four Syrian scholars whose teachings and compositions left an indelible stamp on the Islamic intellectual tradition.⁷⁵ Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) is the senior and by far the most famous member of this illustrious clique, and his fierce championing of the *salafī* approach to Islamic law and theology was viewed with serious consternation by the Shāfi'ī-Ash'arī religio-political elite of the Mamlūk empire.⁷⁶ The *salafī* approach advocated by Ibn Taymiyya sought to break the near monopoly of the four officially sanctioned legal *madhāhib* and one theological *madhhab* (Ash'arism) of Sunnism by means of a careful reconstruction of law and theology on the sole basis of the Qur'ān, sound *ḥadīth*, and the opinions of the 'pious ancestors' (*salaf*) of the first three centuries of Islam.⁷⁷ It also maintained a vigorous polemic against philosophy, Shī'ism, and radical mysticism. The painstaking scholarship of the third of these four scholars, Abū l-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī (d. 742/1341), greatly facilitated this task and set a standard in the field of *isnād* criticism that remains unsurpassed to this day.⁷⁸ Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim b. al-Bahā'

⁷⁵ The two main biographies consulted for al-Dhahabī's life are 'Abd al-Sattār al-Shaykh, *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī* and the introduction by Bashshār Ma'rūf to *Siyar al-nubalā'*, I, 13–44 in particular. The *EI2* article "al-Dhahabī" by Moh. Ben Cheneb and J. de Somogyi (II, 214–6) is particularly outdated with regard to al-Dhahabī's publications. It is somewhat surprising that Tarif Khalidi does not even mention al-Dhahabī in *Arabic Historical Thought*, and I am unaware of any monographs on al-Dhahabī in European languages.

⁷⁶ This event is discussed in some detail by Sherman Jackson, who has translated Ibn Taymiyya's own account of his trials in "Ibn Taymiyyah on Trial in Damascus," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, XXXIX/1 (1994), 41–85. Fazlur Rahman writes with a tone of reverence and admiration for Ibn Taymiyya and his program of "Islamic positivism," see *Revival and Reform*, 132–65.

⁷⁷ One of the best examples of al-Dhahabī's *salafī* mentality can be found in his entry on al-Ghazālī in *Siyar al-nubalā'*: "Do you know what useful knowledge is? It is what was sent down in the Qur'ān and explained by the Messenger ﷺ in speech and deed, and what he did not prohibit. [The Messenger] said: 'Whoever dislikes my practices, is not with me' (*man raghiba 'an sunnati fa-laysa minni*). I urge you, my brother, to study carefully the Book of God, and partake of extensive reading of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* (of al-Bukhārī and Muslim), the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'ī, *Riyāḍ al-ṣālīhin* of al-Nawawī and his book *al-Adhkār*. [If you do this,] you will prosper and succeed," *Siyar*, XIX, 340. Al-Dhahabī follows this advice with a strong warning to shun the "worshippers of philosophy" (*ubbād al-falāsifa*) and the practices of extreme Ṣūfīs (*ahl al-riyāḍāt* and *aṣḥāb al-khalawāt*).

⁷⁸ Al-Mizzī's two most famous works are the *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* and *al-Aṭrāf*. The former is a massive expansion and thorough reworking of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqqdisī's (d. 600/1204) biographical dictionary *al-Kamāl* that was intended to contain biographies

Muḥammad al-Birzālī (d. 739/1338), the fourth of this quartet of Damascene scholars, was renowned for his massive encyclopedia (*muʿjam*) of *ḥadīth* he heard from over three thousand teachers.⁷⁹ Al-Dhahabī appears to have been less politically vocal than his masters Ibn Taymiyya and al-Mizzī, both of whom were imprisoned at various times for their *salafī* beliefs, but he did forfeit a high post at the prestigious Ashrafiyya *madrasa* because of his uncompromising refusal to profess the Ashʿarī creed in public.⁸⁰

It is most likely due to the influence of these three proponents of *salafī* Sunnism that al-Dhahabī directed his talents toward the fields of *ḥadīth* criticism, history, and Qurʾānic recitation. Al-Dhahabī's family included a few minor scholars, and his father achieved a degree of prosperity as a goldsmith in Damascus. His early studies were in the 'seven readings' of the Qurʾān, and his first academic post involved teaching this subject at the Umayyad mosque in 693/1294. The unstable political climate brought on by the Ilkhānids and other Turco-Mongol armies caused al-Dhahabī's father to prohibit him from the customary 'travel for the acquisition of knowledge' (*al-riḥla fi ṭalab al-ʿilm*) of every aspiring scholar, although he was allowed short trips to Baʿlabakk in 693/1294 and Cairo (probably in 695/1295). Al-Dhahabī does not appear to have been particularly eager to travel even after his father passed away in 698/1299, although he did take the opportunity to study with several scholars in the Hijāz after his performance of the pilgrimage to Mecca that same year.⁸¹

Al-Dhahabī's first regular job seems to have been as the *khaṭīb* in a small village outside of Damascus, and it was during this time (703–29/1304–29) that he wrote many of the books that established his reputation. He accepted a position at the *dār al-ḥadīth* section of the Zāhiriyya *madrasa* in Damascus in 729/1329, and succeeded his teacher al-Birzālī's post at the Nafisa *madrasa* when al-Birzālī passed

for every name found in the *isnāds* of the 'six canonical books.' Al-Mizzī states in his introduction that he added about 1700 entries to this original work, and he provides useful lists of teachers and pupils for each of the transmitters it contains. The *Atrāf* is a type of index to the 'six books' and lists all *isnāds* for each key phrase in the *matn* of a *ḥadīth* (the *ṭaraf*).

⁷⁹ *Tadhkira*, V, 235.

⁸⁰ These three most important teachers of al-Dhahabī have been singled out in *Siyar*, I, 35 and *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, 85–7. See also *EI2*, II, 214 for references to his unwillingness to sign the Ashʿarī creed.

⁸¹ *Siyar*, I, 30.

away a decade later. This same year witnessed al-Dhahabī's additional appointment to the newly constructed *madrasa* al-Tankaziyya. Despite his loss of eyesight around 741/1340–1 or 744/1343, al-Dhahabī continued to teach at five schools until his death in 748/1348.

Three of the 128 books described by 'Abd al-Sattār al-Shaykh elevated al-Dhahabī's status to the highest pinnacles of Muslim scholarship. The earliest of these was an enormous history of the first seven centuries of Islam, titled *Tārīkh al-Islām*, the 'first draft' of which was composed in 714/1314. This work remains one of the most ambitious histories of the entire world of Islam, and contains both biographical notices for tens of thousands of religious and secular notables, as well as reports of historical events. The book is arranged in *ṭabaqāt* of ten years each, a period of time that is too short to be considered a "generation;" this observation has led both Bashshār 'Awwād and 'Abd al-Sattār al-Shaykh to classify the *Tārīkh* among Dhahabī's annalistic works.⁸²

The second exceptional composition by al-Dhahabī is *Mizān al-ʿiṭidāl fi naqd al-rijāl*, an encyclopedia of over eleven thousand tarnished *ḥadīth*-transmitters that he rather miraculously assembled in four months in 724/1324. Al-Dhahabī explains in the introduction that he has followed the example of Ibn 'Adī (d. 365/976)⁸³ and included everyone about whom anything negative was said, with the exception of the *ṣaḥāba* and the Imāms of the *madhāhib*, such as Abū Ḥanīfa and al-Shāfiʿī.⁸⁴ He also provides the useful service of identifying twenty-three experts of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and explaining his critical terminology in the introduction of the *Mizān*. This encyclopedia is arranged alphabetically, and therefore is not considered usually among al-Dhahabī's historical works, despite the inclusion of much material of relevance to this discipline.

Al-Dhahabī's final book of extraordinary magnitude and erudition is the *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*. This work is far more than a mere abridgement of the gargantuan *Tārīkh*, and is rather a unique effort to create a universal work of Islamic history on the basis of *ṭabaqāt*.

⁸² *Siyar*, I, 103; *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, 450.

⁸³ Compiler of the famous work *al-Kāmil fi duʿafāʾ al-rijāl*; this book is discussed below in chapter four.

⁸⁴ *Mizān al-ʿiṭidāl fi naqd al-rijāl*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, I (Cairo, 1963), 2–3. This last category is particularly interesting, as several critics are somewhat harsh on Abū Ḥanīfa; this topic is discussed in more detail in chapter VIII.4.

It was probably first compiled in 715/1315 in the wake of *Tārīkh al-Islām*, and underwent revisions throughout the 730's.⁸⁵ Al-Dhahabī identifies 5925 notables, the majority of whom are *ḥadīth* transmitters, and incorporates much biographical material from his vast historical readings in many of the entries. The *Siyar* is possibly the largest book in the Muslim tradition arranged entirely according to *ṭabaqāt*, and can be interpreted as al-Dhahabī's boldest attempt to narrate the growth of the most influential men and women of Islamic civilization, generation by generation, from the period following the Prophet Muḥammad to his own day.⁸⁶

Al-Dhahabī employed the *ṭabaqāt* structure in several of his important works concerned with Qur'ān reciters, theology (*ʿaqīda*), and *ḥadīth* transmission. His *Maʿrifat al-qurrāʾ al-kibār ʿalā l-ṭabaqāt wa l-aʿyār*, composed in 717/1317, was one of the first works devoted exclusively to the history of the master reciters of the Qur'ān from the *ṣaḥāba* to his day. The book consists of 1266 entries⁸⁷ across eighteen *ṭabaqāt* and was incorporated in its entirety in Ibn al-Jazarī's (d. 833/1429) exhaustive biographical dictionary of Qur'ān reciters, *Ghāyat al-nihāya*.⁸⁸

Al-Dhahabī applied his vast knowledge of history and proficiency with the *ṭabaqa* periodization to support his unabashed *salafī* position regarding the attributes of God in the brief treatise *al-Uluw li-l-ʿaliyy al-ghaffār*.⁸⁹ The 'correct' opinions of nearly 150 scholars from the *tābiʿūn* through the Andalusī Qur'ānic exegete Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Qurṭubī (d. 671/1272) are arranged into a mere nine *ṭabaqāt*. The transcendental quality of the *salafī* movement is vivid in *al-Uluw*, as it includes citations from the seven eponyms of the Sunnī legal *madhāhib*, Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765), half of the compilers of the

⁸⁵ Al-Dhahabī states that the "most elevated *isnād* today, the year [7]35, passes through al-Ḥasan b. ʿArafa (d. 257/871)," *Siyar*, XI, 550.

⁸⁶ It is unfortunate that volume XIV covering years 661–700 was not included in the published edition. However, the 23 volumes that have been published remain largely untapped in Western historical studies of Islamic civilization.

⁸⁷ The first published edition has 734 entries, whereas the 1997 edition by Aḥmad Khān includes an additional 535 names. Most of these additions occur in the twelfth through sixteenth *ṭabaqāt*; see the introduction to *Ṭabaqāt al-qurrāʾ* (Riyad, 1997).

⁸⁸ Shams al-Dīn Abū l-Khayr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Dimashqī al-Shāfiʿī, known as Ibn al-Jazarī, taught in Anatolia prior to his recruitment by Tīmūr, who made him *qāḍī* of Shīrāz; see al-Suyūṭī, *Dhayl ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāz*, appended to *Tadhkira*, V, 249.

⁸⁹ Al-Dhahabī, *al-Uluw li-l-ʿaliyy al-ghaffār* (Riyadh, 1995).

'six canonical' *ḥadīth* books, both Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī and, more surprisingly, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1012), as well as a chorus of master Arabic grammarians and linguists. This work confirms not just the polemical utility of the *ṭabaqa* structure, but also demonstrates its unlimited potential for rethinking the traditional understanding of historical development (or, in this case, continuity) within the Islamic tradition.

Three short treatises and one substantial history of *ḥadīth*-transmitters and critics arranged by *ṭabaqāt* can be found in the literary corpus of al-Dhahabī. The first of these is a list of 715 scholars "whose opinions are accepted in *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism" that is arranged into twenty-two *ṭabaqāt*.⁹⁰ The second treatise, *al-Mūqīza*, is a two-part list, the first of which extends from Abū Hurayra (d. 58/678) through Ibn al-Sharqī (d. 325/937) in nine *ṭabaqāt*, followed by fifteen *ṭabaqāt* from ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar (d. 147/764) through Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad (d. 734/1334), grandson of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 659/1261).⁹¹ Each *ṭabaqa* in *al-Mūqīza* consists of nothing more than the names of one to four exemplary scholars of each generation, and it may be one of the last works written (or dictated) by al-Dhahabī.⁹²

A far longer list of *ḥadīth*-transmitters arranged by *ṭabaqāt* is *al-Muʿīn fī ṭabaqāt al-muḥaddithīn*. Al-Dhahabī warns in the succinct introduction of this book that it is not a comprehensive list of great *ḥadīth*

⁹⁰ *Dhikr man yuʿlamad qawluḥ fī l-jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl*, found in ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghudda, *Arbaʿ rasāʾil fī ulūm al-ḥadīth* (Beirut, 1401). This book has not been accessible to me. The description of this epistle can be found in *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, 396–7 and *al-Mūqīza*, 68 (footnote 2).

⁹¹ The editor of *al-Mūqīza* has interpreted somewhat misleadingly these two lists to be a unitary twenty-four *ṭabaqāt* whole. There is a somewhat awkward interpolation immediately following Ibn al-Sharqī's name of the sentence: "And among those who are described as possessing a strong memory and proficiency is a group of the *ṣaḥāba* and *tābiʿūn*" (*wa mimman yūṣafu bi-l-ḥifẓi wa l-iqāni jamāʿatun min al-ṣaḥābati wa l-tābiʿīn*; p. 71). The initial group of nine *ṭabaqāt* is introduced merely by the expression "*wa l-ḥuffāzu ṭabaqāt*" (p. 68). I have labeled below the first nine *ṭabaqāt* as list "a" and the remaining fifteen as list "b." Since list "b" begins with contemporaries of the third *ṭabaqa* in list "a," the numbers in list "b" range from *ṭabaqāt* 3–17. Note that this list is not found in Ibn Daqīq al-ʿId's *al-Iqtirāḥ fī bayān al-istilāḥ*, and so it can be assumed that al-Dhahabī inserted it into *al-Mūqīza* in the course of his abridgement of Ibn Daqīq al-ʿId's book.

⁹² *Al-Mūqīza* lacks the trademark meticulous organization and clarity of al-Dhahabī's major works, and it reads like an extemporaneous lecture on the subject of the basic *ḥadīth* disciplines for a class of novice students. Despite this atypical sloppiness, the book is particularly valuable for the task of identifying al-Dhahabī's favorite scholars, since it preserves what may have been his final opinions on this topic.

scholars, but rather one that seeks to include the names of those whose names are well known throughout the Islamic world and with which every aspiring student of *ḥadīth* should be familiar.⁹³ This book is just a list of 2443 names over twenty-eight *ṭabaqāt*, and the quality of the transmitter is mentioned only occasionally.⁹⁴ The *Muʿīn*, like *al-Mūqīza*, appears to be a late, unpolished work that may have been dictated from memory, and is of interest only insofar as it provides another historical vision of the history of the first seven centuries of *ḥadīth* transmission.

The most important *ṭabaqa*-work by al-Dhahabī for the historical framework of this project is his *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*. This book contains a modest amount of biographical information for 1222 scholars "whose opinions one consults in matters of reliability of transmitters and authenticity of the material."⁹⁵ The term *ḥāfiẓ*, when combined with the expression *thabt*, is explicitly included among the highest ratings for a *ḥadīth* transmitter in *Mizān al-ʾitidāl*,⁹⁶ whereas the expression *thiqa ḥāfiẓ* is considered the second highest category in *al-Mūqīza*.⁹⁷ This expression is further clarified in the entry of Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī *al-ṣaghīr* (d. 375/985–6),⁹⁸ in which al-Dhahabī disagrees with al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's evaluation of Abū Zurʿa as a *ḥāfiẓ* because he "transmitted suspect *ḥadīth* (*manākīr*), as other *ḥuffāz* do, but did not identify them as such; this is something that denigrates one from the status of *ḥāfiẓ*."⁹⁹ This quotation indicates that a *ḥāfiẓ* is free to trans-

⁹³ *Fa-ḥadhihi muqaddimatun fī dhikri asmāʾi ʾalāmi ḥamalati l-āthāri l-nabawīyyati tubaṣṣiru l-ṭāliba l-nabīha wa tudhakkiru l-muḥadditha l-mufida bi-man yaqbuḥu bi-l-ṭalabati an yaḥḥalūhum wa laysa hadhā kitābun bi-l-mustawfī bi-l-kibāri bal li-man sāra dhikruhu fī l-aqtāri wa l-aṣṣār; al-Muʿīn* (Beirut, 1998), 7.

⁹⁴ The thirteenth *ṭabaqa* has quite a few evaluations, for example, whereas the twenty-third *ṭabaqa* has virtually none; *al-Muʿīn*, 112–4, 168–177.

⁹⁵ *Tadhkira*, I, 7. The one-sentence introduction reads as follows: *ḥadhihi tadhkiratun bi-asmāʾi muʿadallī ḥamlati l-ʾilmi l-nabawī wa man yurjʿu ilā yūhādihim fī l-tawḥīd wa l-taḍʾīf wa l-taḥṣīl wa l-taḥṣīl*.

⁹⁶ *Mizān al-ʾitidāl*, I, 4. Other terms equal to *thabt ḥāfiẓ* include *thabt ḥujja*, *thiqa mutqin*, and *thiqa thiqa*.

⁹⁷ *Al-Mūqīza*, 76–7. Note that al-Dhahabī seems to have modified his opinion from that articulated in his earlier work *Mizān al-ʾitidāl* and created a new four-tier rating system for reliable transmitters: 1) *imām*, *ḥujja*, *thabt*, *jahbadh*, *thiqa thiqa*; 2) *thiqa ḥāfiẓ*; 3) *thiqa mutqin*; 4) *thiqa ʾarīf*, *ḥāfiẓ ṣadūq*.

⁹⁸ Not to be confused with the "greater" Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī (d. 264/878) to whom Muslim b. al-Hajjāj is purported to read his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in order to certify its inclusion of exclusively sound *ḥadīth*. The lesser Abū Zurʿa is named Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī; *Tadhkira*, III, 137.

⁹⁹ *Lahu taṣānifu kathīratun yarwī fihā l-manākīra ka-ghayrihi min al-ḥuffāzi wa lā yubayyinu ḥalāhā wa dhālika mim mā yuzrī bi-l-ḥāfiẓ; Tadhkira*, III, 137–8.

mit many weak *ḥadīth*, but that he must be capable of identifying them as suspect, and, presumably, explain the causes of their weakness to his students.

Al-Dhahabī's embrace of the *ṭabaqāt* form of periodization in all of his historical presentations of *ḥadīth*-transmitters suggests the utility of a closer examination of the manifestation of the *ṭabaqāt* structure in Muslim historical writings. The words *ṭabaq* and *ṭibāq* are found in the Qurʾān in three verses where they appear twice in connection with the seven seamless heavens, and once in a somewhat ambiguous passage alluding to either the states of creation or the soul's ascension to heaven.¹⁰⁰ Ibrahim Hafsi has articulated the semantic breadth of the word *ṭabaqa*, which can mean class, value, generation, merit, degree, and group, as well as hierarchy, covering, and all-embracing.¹⁰¹ Franz Rosenthal has suggested that the *ṭabaqa* division is "genuinely Islamic" and the "oldest chronological division which presented itself to Muslim historical thinking."¹⁰² Tarif Khalidi has clarified the deeper differences beneath the superficial similarities between Arabic genealogical works and *ṭabaqāt* books, and emphasizes the role of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/823) in the inauguration of the *ṭabaqāt* structure in his lost texts, some of which served as the platform for *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* of his student and scribe, Ibn Saʿd.¹⁰³ The salient features of the *ṭabaqāt* format expressed in these studies, as well as the books of al-Dhahabī, are 1) its inherent facility to depict teacher-pupil relationships across time; 2) its capability to carve broad groups out of vast numbers of scholars across three continents; 3) its flexibility, in that the historian can select as many 'generations' as he or she deems necessary for the types of scholars so evaluated. The *ṭabaqāt* system of organization, in short, provides a far smoother narrative of the evolution of the Muslim community, phase by phase, than the antinomial effect of the annalistic histories, in which each year ends with a deluge of obituaries that inevitably obscures the greater story of the transmission of knowledge across time.

¹⁰⁰ See Qurʾān 84:19 for the use of *ṭabaq* and 67:3 and 71:15 for the use of *ṭibāq*.

¹⁰¹ Ibrahim Hafsi, "Recherches sur le genre *ṭabaqāt*," 230–3. See also the root ṭ-b-q in *Lisān al-ʿarab*, X (Beirut, 1956), 209–15 for an exhaustive array of meanings.

¹⁰² Franz Rosenthal, *History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden, 1952), 93. Despite his identification of the importance of the *ṭabaqa* approach to history, Rosenthal inexplicably devotes little more than two pages to it in his book.

¹⁰³ Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 44–49.

Ibrahim Hafsi's catalog of works that are based on the *ṭabaqāt* historiographical framework demonstrates its application to myriad fields of Arabo-Islamic civilization and the religious disciplines in particular in the centuries preceding al-Dhahabī.¹⁰⁴ Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is the earliest work in this style to have survived, and was closely followed by the book of Khalīfa b. al-Khayyāt al-ʿUṣfūrī (d. 240/854) and ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Ḥabīb al-Andalusī (d. 238/853).¹⁰⁵ The works of Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965)¹⁰⁶ and Abū l-Shaykh ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Iṣbahānī (d. 369/979)¹⁰⁷ dominate the *ṭabaqāt* books of *ḥadīth*-transmitters in the fourth/tenth century, and one of the most comprehensive lists of master authorities arranged by *ṭabaqāt* can be found in the introduction of Ibn ʿAdī's *al-Kāmil fī duʿafāʾ al-rijāl*.¹⁰⁸ Important *ḥadīth*-transmitter biographical dictionaries of the following two centuries include the large *Hilyat al-awliyāʾ* of Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī (d. 430/1039), *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ* of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083), *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥuffāz min ahl al-ḥadīth* of Yūsuf b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh al-Andalusī (d. 546/1151) and the *Ṭabaqāt al-ruwāt wa ṣanādīq al-ḥukamāʾ* of Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201). Al-Dhahabī even informs us in *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* that the direct inspiration for his compilation of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* was the favorable opinion he had of ʿAlī b. Mufaḍḍal al-Maqdisī's (d. 611/1214) *Kitāb al-arbaʿīn al-murattaba ʿalā l-ṭabaqāt al-arbaʿīn*.¹⁰⁹ This brief survey

¹⁰⁴ Hafsi's previously cited three-part article catalogs both extant and lost *ṭabaqāt* works in the following nine fields: *ḥadīth* scholars, Qurʾān reciters and exegetes, jurists (*fuqahāʾ*), ṣūfīs, poets, grammarians and lexicographers, *ḥukamāʾ* and physicians, general regional works, and "non-Sunnī spiritual families" (i.e. sectarian groups). It is somewhat surprising that he neglected to include what is probably the largest *ṭabaqāt* work, namely al-Dhahabī's previously discussed *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*; this is probably due to the fact that its title does not indicate that it is a work of this genre.

¹⁰⁵ Hafsi, I, 247–8. Both of these works have been published: Khalīfa b. Khayyāt, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt* (Baghdad, 1967); Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-lāʾiḥ* (Madrid, 1991).

¹⁰⁶ Hafsi, I, 250; *Tadhkira*, 89; *GAS*, I, 189–91. Ibn Ḥibbān is particularly famous for his twelve-volume encyclopedia of the *ṭabīʿūn* entitled *Kitāb al-thiqāt* (Hafsi mislabels this work as *Kitāb al-tābiʿīn*) and might be responsible for their classification into three *ṭabaqāt* (pace Hafsi, who credits al-Dhahabī with this achievement, p. 258).

¹⁰⁷ Hafsi, I, 251; *Tadhkira*, III, 105. This book has been published: Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh b. Jaʿfar b. Ḥayyān *al-maʿrūf bi-ʿAbī al-Shaykh al-Iṣbahānī*, *Ṭabaqāt al-muḥaddithīn bi-Iṣbahān wa l-wāridīn ʿalayhā* (Beirut, 1987–88).

¹⁰⁸ This text is analyzed below in chapter four.

¹⁰⁹ *Siyar*, XXII, 65; *al-Hāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, 460. This book has survived in manuscript and consists of four scholars per *ṭabaqāt* for ten *ṭabaqāt* down to the fifth/eleventh century. Al-Dhahabī cites this work in several places in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, such as

of major historical works concerned with *ḥadīth*-transmitters shows both the deep impact of Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* and al-Dhahabī's elevation of the genre to new heights with *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* and *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*.

The next task at hand is to analyze three of al-Dhahabī's books in order to articulate a preliminary historical periodization of the history of master *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics. The two easiest books with which to commence this quest are *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* and *al-Muqīza*. Al-Dhahabī identifies the following twenty-three scholars in five groups as his primary sources of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism in the introduction to *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*:

Table 2.1: Master critics mentioned in *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*

Name	Death Date	Group/Book
Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān	198	One
Yahyā b. Maʿīn	233	Two
Abū Khaythama, Zuhayr b. Ḥarb	234	Two
ʿAlī b. ʿAbdullāh al-Madīnī	234	Two
Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	241	Two
al-Fallās, Abū Ḥafṣ ʿAmr b. ʿAlī	249	Two
al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl	256	Three
Ibrāhīm b. Yaʿqūb al-Jūzajānī	259	Three
Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj	261	Three
Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī, ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Karīm	264	Three
Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Idrīs	277	Three
al-Tirmidhī, Abū ʿĪsā Muḥammad b. ʿĪsā	279	Four
al-Nasāʾī, Aḥmad b. Shuʿayb	303	Four
al-Dūlābī, Abū Bishr Muḥammad b. Aḥmad	310	Four
Ibn Khuzayma, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ishāq	311	Four
al-ʿUqaylī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAmr	322	Four
Ibn Abī Ḥātim, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad	327	Book ¹¹⁰

when he mentions that ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar, Mālik, Shuʿba, and Sufyān al-Thawrī comprise the second *ṭabaqāt*, that Ibn al-Mubārak, Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī, and Ibn Wahb comprise the third *ṭabaqāt*, and that al-Shāfiʿī, Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn al-Madīnī, and Ibn Maʿīn are the four members of the fourth *ṭabaqāt* according to Ibn al-Mufaḍḍal; *Tadhkira*, I, 121, 204, and 266.

¹¹⁰ Presumably his famous work *al-Jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl*.

Table 2.1 (*cont.*)

Name	Death Date	Group/Book
Ibn Hibbān, Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad al-Bustī	354	Book ¹¹¹
Ibn 'Adī, Abū Aḥmad 'Abdullāh al-Jurjānī	365	<i>al-Kāmil</i>
al-Azdī, Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn	374	Book ¹¹²
al-Dāraquṭnī, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. 'Umar	385	<i>al-Du'afā'</i>
al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, Abū 'Abdullāh	405	<i>al-Du'afā'</i>
Ibn al-Jawzī, Abū l-Faraj 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī	597	Book ¹¹³

There are three aspects of this list that are of particular interest. The first is that al-Dhahabī, following a quotation of Ibn Ḥanbal, places the prominent Baṣran scholar Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān at the head of the list of *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics.¹¹⁴ The second observation is that all but the first and last men on this list lived the greatest portions of their lives in the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries. Particularly conspicuous is the century and a half gap between al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī and Ibn al-Jawzī and the nearly two century lacuna between Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Dhahabī. Finally, it is important to recognize that only six of these master critics lived prior to al-Bukhārī, and ten of them flourished in the century following the compilation of what came to be known as the 'six canonical' Sunnī *ḥadīth* books. While the introduction to *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* provides several clues as to the identities of the most important *ḥadīth* scholars in the eyes of al-Dhahabī, it is clear that we must cast the net further in order to obtain a more complete grasp of the most distinguished scholars of this tradition.

¹¹¹ As the *Mizān* is particularly concerned with blemished transmitters, this probably refers to his book of weak scholars, *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*.

¹¹² This probably refers to his large compilation of weak transmitters (*du'afā'*) mentioned in *al-Tadhkira*, III, 117. Sezgin does not mention it in *GAS*, I, 199–200.

¹¹³ This almost certainly refers to his *Kitāb al-du'afā' wa l-matrūkīn* that al-Dhahabī abridged once and enlarged on two separate occasions; *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, 398.

¹¹⁴ Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān was fortunate to have studied closely with the great Baṣran scholar Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj and even offered his home as a 'safe house' to Sufyān al-Thawrī during the latter's period of hiding in Baṣra from the 'Abbāsīd caliphs around the year 160/777; see Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VI, 539. Yaḥyā's contribution to *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism is discussed in detail in chapter four.

Al-Mūqīza, despite its brevity and unevenness, provides several useful indications of al-Dhahabī's favorite scholars. The most unambiguous statement on this topic is that "the sources of knowledge of the reliable transmitters (*al-thiqāt*) are *al-Tārīkh* of al-Bukhārī, [*al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl* of] Ibn Abī Ḥātim, [*Kitāb al-thiqāt*] of Ibn Hibbān, and *Tahdhīb al-kamāl* [of al-Mizzī]."¹¹⁵ Al-Dhahabī also identifies three classes of critics—severe (*ḥadd*), fair (*mu'tadīl*), and lenient (*mutasāḥul*)—and names a select few transmitters to each of them. Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Ma'īn, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, and Ibn Khirāsh¹¹⁶ are placed in the 'severe' category, Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, and Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī are 'fair,' and al-Tirmidhī, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, and, on occasion, al-Dāraquṭnī, are considered 'lenient.'¹¹⁷ These three gradations of severity are also found in *Dhikr man yu'tamad qawluḥ fi l-jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, although it is important to note that Ibn 'Adī is included among the category of the 'fair' critics in this treatise.¹¹⁸ Note that all of the scholars mentioned in this paragraph, with the exceptions of al-Mizzī and Ibn Khirāsh, are also found in the list of critics presented in *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* and shed little light on the recently mentioned lacunae in the historical record of master critics.

The two skeletal lists discussed above in the introductory description of *al-Mūqīza* provide a nearly unbroken series of master *ḥadīth* scholars (*huffāẓ*) of some prestige from the time of the Prophet Muḥammad to the eighth/fourteenth century.

Table 2.2: Master *ḥadīth* scholars in *al-Mūqīza*

Name	Death Date	Ṭabaqa
1 Abū Hurayra al-Dawsī	58	1a
2 Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab	94	2a
3 al-Zuhri, Muḥammad Ibn Shihāb	124	3a
4 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar b. Ḥaṣḥ b. 'Āṣim	147	3b
5 Ibn 'Awn, 'Abdullāh b. Arṭabān	151	3b

¹¹⁵ *yanbū'u ma'rifati l-thiqāt: tārīkh al-Bukhārī, wa Ibn Abī Ḥātim, wa Ibn Hibbān, wa kitāb al-tahdhīb al-kamāl; al-Mūqīza*, 79.

¹¹⁶ Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf al-Marwazī, then al-Baghdādī (d. 283/896) is identified as "the critic" (*al-nāqid*) in the *Tadhkira* (II, 185).

¹¹⁷ *Al-Mūqīza*, 83.

¹¹⁸ The strictest critics mentioned in this treatise are Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibrāhīm b. Ya'qūb al-Jūzajānī; the lenient ones are al-Tirmidhī, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, and al-Bayhaqī; and the fair ones (*al-mu'tadīlūn al-munṣifūn*) are al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, and Ibn 'Adī; *al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī*, 396–7.

Table 2.2 (*cont.*)

Name	Death Date	Ṭabaqa
6 Mis'ar b. Kidām, Abū Salama	155	3b
7 Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj	160	4a
8 Zā'ida b. Qudāma, Abū l-Ṣalt	161	4b
9 Sufyān b. Sa'īd al-Thawrī	161	4a
10 al-Layth b. Sa'd	175	4b
11 Ḥammād b. Zayd	179	4b
12 Mālik b. Anas	179	4a
13 Ibn al-Mubārak, 'Abdullāh	181	5a
14 Ibn Wahb, 'Abdullāh b. Wahb al-Fihri	197	5b
15 Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh	197	5a
16 Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān	198	5a
17 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī	198	5a
18 Abū Usāma, Ḥammād b. Usāma	201	5b
19 Yazīd b. Hārūn b. Zādhān al-Wāsiṭī	206	5b
20 Yahyā b. Ma'īn, Abū Zakariyyā	233	6a
21 Abū Khaythama, Zuhayr b. Ḥarb	234	6b
22 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Madīnī	234	6a
23 Ibn Numayr, Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh	234	6b
24 Ibn Abī Shayba, Abū Bakr 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad	235	6b
25 Ibn Rāhawayh, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm	238	6a
26 Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	241	6a
27 Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ṭabarī	248	6b
28 al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl	256	7a
29 Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Naysābūrī	261	7a
30 Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Karīm	264	7a
31 Ibn Wāra, Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Rāzī	270	7b
32 'Abbās b. Muḥammad al-Dūrī	271	7b
33 Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath	275	7a
34 Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Idrīs	277	7a
35 Ibn Abī Khaythama, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Zuhayr	279	7b
36 al-Tirmidhī, Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad b. 'Īsā	279	7b
37 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	290	7b
38 Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad Jazara, Abū 'Alī	293	8a
39 Abū 'Imrān, Mūsā b. Hārūn al-Bazzāz	294	8a
40 al-Nasā'ī, Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb	303	8a
41 Ibn al-Akhram, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās	310	8b
42 Ibn Khuzayma, Muḥammad b. Ishāq	311	8a

Table 2.2 (*cont.*)

Name	Death Date	Ṭabaqa
43 Ibn Ṣā'id, Abū Muḥammad Yahyā b. Muḥammad	318	8b
44 Ibn Jawṣā, Abū l-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. 'Umayr	320	8b
45 Ibn Ziyād, Abū Bakr 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad	324	8b
46 Ibn al-Sharqī, Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	325	9a
47 Ibn 'Adī, Abū Aḥmad 'Abdullāh	365	9b
48 al-Ismā'īlī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm	371	9b
49 al-Ḥākim, Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. Muḥammad	378	9b
50 Ibn Manda, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Ishāq	395	10b
51 Abū Ḥāzim al-'Abdawī, 'Umar b. Aḥmad	418	11b
52 al-Barqānī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	425	11b
53 al-Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn	458	12b
54 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Abū 'Umar Yūsuf	463	12b
55 al-Ḥumaydī, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr	488	13b
56 Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad	507	13b
57 al-Sam'ānī, Abū Sa'd 'Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad	562	14b
58 al-Silafī, Abū Ṭāhir Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	576	14b
59 al-Ḥāzimī, Abū Sa'īd Muḥammad b. Mūsā	584	15b
60 al-Ruhāwī, 'Abd al-Qādir b. 'Abdullāh al-Ḥanbalī	612	15b
61 al-Ḍiyā', Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid	643	16b
62 Ibn Sayyid al-Nās, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad	659	16b
63 Abū l-Faḥḥ, Muḥammad b. Muḥ. Ibn Sayyid al-Nās	734	17b

Several observations can be gleaned from these seventeen *ṭabaqāt*. It is probably appropriate that Abū Hurayra, the *ṣaḥābī* whom Ibn al-Ṣalāh credits with the greatest aggregate of transmissions, and his son-in-law Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, crown this list of illustrious *ḥadīth* scholars. The generations of al-Zuhri and Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj form the bridge from the senior *tābi'ūn* to the master critic Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān and his contemporaries (*ṭabaqa* 5). The third/ninth century makes another strong showing in this selection, and includes twenty-

six scholars from Ibn Ma'in (*ṭabaqa* 6) through Ibn al-Sharqī (*ṭabaqa* 9a). Five new scholars of the fifth/eleventh century appear in this list, two of whom hail from al-Andalus.¹¹⁹ There remains an irritating lacuna in the first half of the sixth century between Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. 507/1113–4) and Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī al-Marwazī (d. 562/1167). Likewise, the gap between the Andalusī Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 659/1261) and his grandson Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. Muḥammad begs for an explanation. While the *Mūqīza* has narrowed the historical abysses manifest in the list of master *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics in *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, it is apparent that an investigation of the *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* is necessary in order to gain a more complete understanding of al-Dhahabī's favorite scholars in this field during the first seven centuries of Islamic civilization.

How do we sort the sublime *ḥāfiẓ* from the merely good *ḥāfiẓ* in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*? One technique would be to extract only the scholars who are of the highest grade of excellence according to the criteria articulated in *al-Mūqīza*, namely those scholars evaluated as *imām*, *ḥujja*, *thabt*, *jahbadh*, or *thiqa thiqa*.¹²⁰ Unfortunately, this approach does not reduce the number of entries to a manageable number, as it seems that roughly half of the men included in the *Tadhkira* are classified as *imāms*.¹²¹ Fortunately, there is an undefined term of distinction employed by al-Dhahabī a mere fifty-four times in the *Tadhkira* that occurs at least once in nineteen of the twenty-one *ṭabaqāt* whose importance shall be made clear in the next few paragraphs: Shaykh al-Islām.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (#54) and al-Ḥumaydī (#55).

¹²⁰ *Al-Mūqīza*, 76.

¹²¹ A sampling of *ṭabaqāt* from the second half of the *Tadhkira* yields the following *imām* percentages: *ṭabaqa* 11 is 44% *imāms*; *ṭabaqa* 13 is 52% *imāms*; *ṭabaqa* 15 is 60% *imāms*; and *ṭabaqa* 17 is 71% *imāms*. The total number of *imāms* in these four *ṭabaqāt* is 112 out of 220 entries (51%). This high yield is not surprising because it is in line with the Ibn Taymiyya *salafī* articulation of transcendental Sunnism that seeks as diverse a group of scholarly role models as possible, in contrast to the narrow legal *madhhab* approach of the mediocre masses of jurists. It should not be forgotten that the *salafī* Sunnīs did not have a monopoly on this universalistic spirit, for any intellectually oriented jurist would have to be well versed in the teachings of the *imāms* of the three Sunnī *madhāhib* to which he did not belong. Note that al-Dhahabī does appear to be much more selective with the terms *ḥujja*, *thabt*, *thiqa*, and especially *jahbadh*.

¹²² The word 'Shaykh' is a term of respect and honor, usually reserved for elders in general, and master teachers in particular. The term in English reads something like 'The Senior Islamic Scholar.'

The term Shaykh al-Islām has a rich history as an honorific for "the most admired of influential 'ulamā' in their milieu."¹²³ It seems to have originated in Khurāsān towards the end of the fourth/tenth century and eventually became an actual office in the following century in the East. Bulliet observes that the term does not appear to have been strictly honorific in Syria and Egypt, and mentions the example of Ibn Taymiyya as someone who received this title from his admirers but not his detractors. The Shaykh al-Islām acquired an unequivocal bureaucratic status under the Ottoman Empire, as the *muftī* of the capital, as far back as the turn of the eighth/fourteenth century.¹²⁴ Neither Bulliet's article, nor the modern biographies by Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf and 'Abd al-Sattār al-Shaykh even mention al-Dhahabī's usage of this term, and, since al-Dhahabī does not elucidate its meaning in either *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* nor *al-Mūqīza*, a brief discussion about its significance is in order.

Al-Dhahabī employs a colorful array of honorifics in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* that include either the word "Shaykh" or "Islām."¹²⁵ The use of the former is far more common than that of the latter, and the majority of examples involving the term Shaykh are used in conjunction with either a geographical location or category of scholars. Abū 'Amr al-Ḥīrī (d. 317/929) is identified as the Shaykh of Nishapur,¹²⁶ Ibn al-Jabbāb Aḥmad b. Khālid (d. 322/934) as the Shaykh of al-Andalus,¹²⁷ Abū l-Qāsim al-Zanjānī (d. 471/1078–9) as the Shaykh of al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf (Mecca),¹²⁸ Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firyābī (d. 212/827) as the Shaykh of Syria,¹²⁹ and al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066) as the Shaykh of all of Khurāsān.¹³⁰ Among the masters of certain

¹²³ R. W. Bulliet, "Shaykh al-Islām," part 1, *EI2*, IX, 399–400. See also his article "The Shaikh al-Islam and the evolution of Islamic society," *Studia Islamica*, XXXV (1972), 53–67.

¹²⁴ "Shaykh al-Islām," part 2, *EI2*, IX, 400.

¹²⁵ The only occurrence of the expression 'shaykh' in the technical sense meaning "head of a religious school" is the case of the nineteenth-*ṭabaqa* scholar Ibn al-Ṣābūnī (d. 604/1207–8), who is identified as Shaykh Dār al-Nūriyya; *Tadhkira*, IV, 170.

¹²⁶ *Tadhkira*, III, 15.

¹²⁷ *Tadhkira*, III, 25.

¹²⁸ *Tadhkira*, III, 243. The prominent student of the mystic al-Junayd, Ibn al-A'rābī (d. 340/951–2; *ṭabaqa* 13), is also identified as a Shaykh al-Ḥaram; *ibid.*, III, 47–8.

¹²⁹ *Tadhkira*, I, 275. Another 'Shaykh of the people of Syria' of the same generation is Abu Mushir 'Abd al-A'lā b. Mushir (d. 218/833) who fell victim to the *mihna*; *ibid.*, I, 279.

¹³⁰ *Tadhkira*, III, 219. An earlier 'Shaykh of Khurāsān' is al-Bukhārī's teacher

classes of scholars, we find Muḥammad b. Dāwūd (d. 342/953) as the Shaykh of the Ṣūfīs,¹³¹ Ibn al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 619/1222) as the Shaykh of the Qurʾān reciters (*al-qurrāʾ*),¹³² and al-Dimyāṭī (d. 705/1306) as the Shaykh of the *ḥadīth* scholars (*muḥaddithūn*).¹³³ Two special cases are Ibn al-Zubayr (d. 708/1308–9), who is the Shaykh of both the *ḥadīth* scholars and Qurʾān reciters in al-Andalus,¹³⁴ and al-Barqānī (d. 425/1034), Shaykh of the jurists (*fuqahāʾ*), *ḥadīth* scholars, and all of Baghdad.¹³⁵

Three other types of compound honorifics employing the word Shaykh can be found in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*. The first of these is one that acknowledges a scholar's accomplishments in a particular art or skill outside of the core disciplines of Qurʾān recitation, *ḥadīth* transmission, and jurisprudence, as can be seen in the cases of the Shaykh of belle-lettres (*adab*), Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 328/940),¹³⁶ and the Shaykh of Muʿtazilī theology (*ʿitizāl*), al-Sammān (d. 445/1053).¹³⁷ Secondly, al-Ḍiyāʾ Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī (d. 643/1245) is identified as 'Shaykh al-Sunna,' which probably indicates a mastery of Sunnī *ḥadīth* or theology.¹³⁸ The final compound honorific of interest is that of a temporal nature, and two examples of this type found in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* are the "Shaykh of the time (*al-waqt*)" Abū Bakr

Makkī b. Ibrāhīm (d. 215/830) who returned to Balkh after a decade in Mecca; *ibid.*, I, 268. Note also Ibn Rāhawayh's sobriquet 'Shaykh of the people of the East'; *ibid.*, II, 17.

¹³¹ *Tadhkira*, III, 78.

¹³² *Tadhkira*, IV, 117.

¹³³ *Tadhkira*, IV, 179. His name is 'Abd al-Mu'min b. Khalaf. Ibn Farḥ al-Ishbīlī (d. 699/1300) of *ṭabaqa* 21 is also graced with this honorific; *ibid.*, IV, 185.

¹³⁴ *Tadhkira*, IV, 183. His name is Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Zubayr.

¹³⁵ *Tadhkira*, III, 183. His name is Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad.

¹³⁶ *Tadhkira*, III, 42.

¹³⁷ *Tadhkira*, III, 212. The case of al-Sammān is particularly interesting, not just because he is a Muʿtazilī who was gifted with proficiency in the arts of *ḥadīth* transmission, but because al-Dhahabī "denigrates" him from the rank of Shaykh al-Islām. This denigration was probably due to the fact that al-Dhahabī could not accept any champion of speculative theology (*kalām*), whether Muʿtazilī or Ashʿarī, among the most elite master scholars of Islamic civilization.

¹³⁸ *Tadhkira*, IV, 133. Another case of "Shaykh al-Sunna" is the Kufan Warqāʾ b. ʿUmar (d. around 160/777) who settled in al-Madāʾin; *ibid.*, I, 169. Compound honorifics with the word Sunna are extremely rare in the *Tadhkira*; other examples are the 'Sign of the Sunna' (*ʿalam al-sunna*) Abū Naṣr al-Sijzī (d. 444/1052–3), and the 'Reviver of the Sunna' (*muḥyī l-sunna*) Abū Muḥammad al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122); *ibid.*, III, 211 and IV, 37.

al-Firyābī (d. 301/913)¹³⁹ and the Egyptian "Shaykh of his era" (*ʿaṣrih*), Ibn Ḥaddād (d. 344/956).¹⁴⁰

Al-Dhahabī appears to be extremely conservative in his use of compound honorifics with the word 'Islām' in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*. Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī al-Naysābūrī (d. 349/960) and ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī (d. 600/1204) are the only two post-canonical master *ḥadīth* scholars to be praised with the expression *Muḥaddith al-Islām*. One of the only other example of a glorification based on the word "Islām," other than Shaykh al-Islām, is reserved for the "Crown of Islām" (*tāj al-islām*) Abū Saʿd al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1167), whose encyclopedia *al-Ansāb* proved to be invaluable in al-Dhahabī's own historical investigations.

This brief analysis of the terms 'Shaykh' and 'Islām' demonstrates how al-Dhahabī restricted the fairly broad former expression with the latter one in his compound honorific 'Shaykh al-Islām,' but it sheds little light on his criteria for inclusion in this elite coterie of scholars. A closer look at the fifty-four members of this group reveals four primary qualities that appear to be at work in al-Dhahabī's discerning mind. The first quality is that all of these men are qualified as Imām in addition to Shaykh al-Islām, while this is not always the case among other scholars who are identified as Shaykh.¹⁴¹ The second trait, which might be related to the first, is the overt rejection of all forms of speculative theology (*kalām*), whether of a Muʿtazilī or state-sanctioned Ashʿarī variety.¹⁴² The third characteristic is a degree of exceptional erudition in at least two of the following four disciplines: Qurʾānic readings, general *ḥadīth* criticism (*ʿilāl*), *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism (*al-jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl*), and jurisprudence.¹⁴³ The

¹³⁹ *Tadhkira*, II, 190. His name is Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad and he served as a judge in Dīnawār.

¹⁴⁰ *Tadhkira*, III, 77. Honorifics with temporal expressions are relatively infrequent in the *Tadhkira*; examples include, the 'musnid of his time' (*zamānīh*) Abū l-Shaykh al-Iṣbahānī (d. 369/979–80), the "ḥāfiẓ of the time" (*al-zamān*) Ibn al-Naḥḥās al-Miṣrī (d. 370/980–1), and the 'muḥaddith of the age' (*al-ʿaṣr*) Abū ʿAbdullāh Ibn Manda (d. 395/1005); *Tadhkira*, III, 105, 134, and 157, respectively.

¹⁴¹ Examples of Shuyūkh who are not Imāms include the Shāfiʿī Ibn al-Ḥaddād and the Muʿtazilī al-Sammān; *Tadhkira*, III, 77 and 213.

¹⁴² Al-Dhahabī explicitly lauds Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ for shunning all speculative theology; *Tadhkira*, IV, 149.

¹⁴³ Some scholars, such as al-Dāraqutnī and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, excelled in three of these categories. If my hypothesis is correct, it would explain why only al-Bukhārī and al-Nasāʾī are labeled as Shaykh al-Islām among the six canonical compilers; only these two men left distinguished works in both the fields of general *ḥadīth*

fourth and final quality is a serious degree of asceticism and even "moderate Šūfism" of the types associated with Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797) and 'Aṭīyya b. Sa'īd al-Andalusī (d. 408/1017–8 in Mecca), respectively. The following chart of al-Dhahabī's fifty-four Shuyūkh al-Islām found in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* brings us one step closer to the goal of our quest for a historical framework of the first seven centuries of Sunnī ḥadīth scholarship.¹⁴⁴

Table 2.3: Shuyūkh al-Islām in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*

Name	Death Date	City	Ṭabaqa
1 Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab	94	Medina	2
2 al-Ḥasan b. Abī l-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī	110	Basra	3
3 Muḥammad b. al-Munkadir	130	Medina	4
4 Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī	143	Medina	4
5 Sulaymān al-Taymī	143	Basra	4
6 al-A'mash, Sulaymān b. Mihrān	148	Kufa	4
7 al-Awzā'i, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Amr	157	Syria	5
8 Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj	160	Basra	5
9 Sufyān b. Sa'īd al-Thawrī	161	Kufa	5
10 Ḥammād b. Salama	167	Basra	5
11 Mālik b. Anas	179	Medina	5

criticism and ḥadīth-transmitter criticism. (Note that outside *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* al-Dhahabī explicitly states his own opinion that al-Nasā'ī was more proficient with respect to ḥadīth, ḥadīth defects (*ilal*), and ḥadīth-transmitters than Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Tirmidhī; *Siyar*, XIV, 133.) There may be exceptions to my "two disciplines" rule, however, as I am not thoroughly familiar with the works of all fifty-four Shuyūkh al-Islām, but I think that it holds true for the vast majority of them.

¹⁴⁴ Note that al-Dhahabī is not consistent with his employment of the term Shaykh al-Islām in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, and *Tārīkh al-Islām*. For example, of the first 49 Shuyūkh al-Islām listed in the *Tadhkira*, the following 17 men do not receive this sobriquet in their respective entries in *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*: Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī, Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī, al-Ḥusayn al-Ju'fī, Abū 'Āsim, al-Muqrī, al-Šūrī, Hishām b. 'Ammār, al-Ashajj, al-Dārimī, al-Bukhārī (?), Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, 'Aṭīyya b. Sa'īd, al-Dānī, and Abū Mūsā l-Madīnī. We shall see also in chapter five that certain scholars are identified as Shaykh al-Islām in the *Siyar* but not in the *Tadhkira*. Finally, al-Dhahabī is extremely conservative with his use of the expression Shaykh al-Islām in *Tārīkh al-Islām*, as only Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik b. Anas, Ibn al-Mubārak, al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād, Ibn 'Uyayna, 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī, and al-Nawawī receive this designation among the 54 Shuyūkh al-Islām found in the *Tadhkira*. Despite al-Dhahabī's inconsistent application of this sobriquet, it does appear that he reserves it for the very best and most pious ḥadīth scholars, and it is thus a useful signifier for his favorite experts of this discipline.

Table 2.3 (cont.)

Name	Death Date	City	Ṭabaqa
12 'Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak	181	Khurāsān, Syria	6
13 Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī	185	Syria	6
14 al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād	187	Mecca	6
15 Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh	193	Kufa	6
16 Sufyān b. 'Uyayna	198	Mecca	6
17 Yazīd b. Hārūn	206	Wāsiṭ	6
18 al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Ju'fī al-Muqrī	203	Kufa	7
19 Abū 'Āsim al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Makhilad	212	Basra	7
20 al-Muqrī, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān	213	Basra, Mecca	7
21 al-Šūrī, Muḥammad b. al-Mubārak	215	Syria	7
22 al-Qa'nabī, 'Abdullāh b. Maslama	221	Basra, Mecca	7
23 Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	241	Baghdad	8
24 Hishām b. 'Ammār	245	Syria	8
25 al-Ashajj, Abū Sa'īd 'Abdullāh	257	Kufa	8
26 al-Dārimī, 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān	255	Samarqand	9
27 al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'il	256	Bukhara	9
28 al-Dhuhli, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā	258	Nishapur	9
29 Ismā'il al-Qāḍī, Abū Ishāq	282	Baghdad	9
30 al-Ḥarbī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Ishāq	285	Baghdad	9
31 Baqiyy b. Makhilad al-Qurṭubī	276	Andalusia	10
32 Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī	294	Samarqand	10
33 al-Nasā'ī, Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb	303	Syria, Egypt	10
34 Ibn Khuzayma, Muḥammad b. Ishāq	311	Nishapur	10
35 Ibn Surayj, al-Qāḍī Abū l-'Abbās	306	Baghdad	11
36 Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, 'Abd al-Raḥmān	327	Rayy	11
37 Abū l-Naḍr al-Ṭūsī, Muḥammad	344	Ṭūs	12
38 al-Ismā'ilī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad	371	Jurjān	12
39 Ibn Mihrān, Abū Muslim	375	Baghdad	12
40 al-Dāraquṭnī, 'Alī b. 'Umar	385	Baghdad	12
41 'Aṭīyya b. Sa'īd al-Šūfī	408	Andalusia, Mecca	13
42 al-Dānī, 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd	444	Cordoba	14
43 Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Abū 'Umar	463	Andalusia	14
44 Abū Ismā'il 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī	481	Herat	14
45 al-Taymī, Abū l-Qāsim Ismā'il	535	Isfahan	15
46 Abū l-'Alā' al-Hamadḥānī	569	Hamadhan	16
47 al-Silafī, Abū Ṭāhir Aḥmad	576	Isfahan, Alexandria	16

Table 2.3 (*cont.*)

	Name	Death Date	City	Ṭabaqa
48	Abū Mūsā l-Madīnī, Muḥammad	581	Isfahan	16
49	Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, 'Uthmān	643	Khurāsān, Syria	18
50	al-Mundhirī, 'Abd al-'Azīm	656	Syria, Egypt	18
51	al-Nawawī, Yahyā b. Sharaf	676	Syria	20
52	Ibn Daqīq al-'Id, Abū l-Faḥ	702	Egypt	20
53	al-Ḥārithī, Qādī al-Quḍāt Mas'ūd	712	Iraq, Egypt	21
54	Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Ḥalīm	728	Syria	21

The most important qualities of this elite group of master Sunnī scholars are its near-continuous nature and the geographical diversity of its members. Only two of the twenty post-*ṣaḥāba ṭabaqāt* are absolutely bereft of at least one Shaykh al-Islām (*ṭabaqāt* 17 and 19), and none has more than six (*ṭabaqa* 6). The proximity of these two defective *ṭabaqāt*, the first on the eve of the Mongol irruption, and the second in the generation after the infamous sack of Baghdad (656/1258) not only suggests the massive damage of these Central Asian conquerors upon Sunnī *ḥadīth* erudition, but indicates a radical disjunction in the rich six century, sixteen *ṭabaqāt*, far-flung global network of Muslim scholars. The master *ḥadīth* scholars of this network were limited to the Ḥijāz and Iraq for the first four *ṭabaqāt*, and flourished in Syria from the fifth to the tenth *ṭabaqāt*.¹⁴⁵ Baghdad enjoyed the presence of a Shaykh al-Islām in each of the eighth through twelfth *ṭabaqāt* (except 10), but appears to have declined after the lives of Ibn Mihrān and al-Dāraquṭnī. The ninth *ṭabaqa* vividly illustrates the dramatic rise in the quality of the scholars in the Eastern Iranian lands and Transoxania, a situation that persisted through 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī in Herat (*ṭabaqa* 15). The coterie of elite Sunnī scholars first achieved its global status in the tenth *ṭabaqa*, when Baqīyy b. Makhḥad established a standard of erudition in al-Andalus that reached its apogee with the extraordinary scholars of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Abū 'Amr al-Dānī in the fourteenth *ṭabaqa*,

¹⁴⁵ It is interesting that the five Shuyūkh al-Islām who lived in Syria prior to the Mongols flourished under 'Abbāsīd, and not Umayyad, rule.

and continued to produce first rate scholars down to al-Dhahabī's time.¹⁴⁶ Finally, the investment of the Seljuqs in Western Iran in general, and Isfahan in particular, is evidenced by the monopoly of this region among the Shuyūkh al-Islām of the fifteenth and sixteenth *ṭabaqāt*.¹⁴⁷

II.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to construct both conceptual and historical frameworks for the inquiry into the development of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship during its first seven centuries of creative compilation. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddīma* furnished the necessary conceptual framework by means of an array of technical terms, several of which had been established since the third and fourth centuries of Islamic civilization, and demonstrated the centrality of *isnād* criticism (*'ilm al-rijāl*) to the *ḥadīth* disciplines. Al-Dhahabī's lists and books provided a skeletal outline of the historical development of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship that stretched across the Dār al-Islām from Cordoba to Samarqand. Since the major lacunae that we encountered prior to and after Ibn al-Jawzī in the initial list of *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics found in *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* were narrowed far enough by our investigations into *al-Muqīza* and *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, it is now possible to articulate a seven-phase periodization of the first seven centuries of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship, which will help illuminate the relationship of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal to the greater story of this literature.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Al-Dhahabī remarks at the end of *al-Mu'in* that the only places that still host strong Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholars in his day are Syria, Egypt, the Maghrib, and al-Andalus; *al-Mu'in*, 232.

¹⁴⁷ These findings are explored in far richer detail in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁸ Note that that al-Dhahabī includes all of the previously cited men in *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* and *al-Muqīza* in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, and that, when these two lists are juxtaposed with the Shaykh al-Islām list, there is at least one master scholar for each of the twenty-one *ṭabaqāt* in the *Tadhkira*.

CHAPTER THREE

A HISTORICAL NARRATIVE: AL-DHAHABĪ'S VISION OF THE FIRST SEVEN CENTURIES OF SUNNĪ HADĪTH SCHOLARSHIP

III.1

How might a Sunnī scholar in Mamlūk Syria articulate the evolution of the *ḥadīth* literature from the time of the Prophet Muḥammad to his own milieu? The twenty-one *ṭabaqāt* structure of al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* answers this very question, as it describes the historical process of *ḥadīth* scholarship by carving a manageable number of 'generations' out of a seven hundred year period across a vast geographical area. It is necessary, however, prior to the presentation of this condensed articulation of al-Dhahabī's historical vision in seven phases, to clarify how this narrative contributes to the general understanding of the key role of *ḥadīth* scholars in the emergence of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century.

The first reason for this excursus is that I have chosen to study the emergence of Sunnism from the angle of several early books that fall under the rubric of *ḥadīth* literature. It has been demonstrated in the introduction of this book that Western scholarship has been concerned overwhelmingly with the question of authenticity of *ḥadīths* and shown little or no interest in its historical development.¹ This chapter seeks to elucidate how the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Hanbal fits into the broader tradition of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship that crystallized only during al-Dhahabī's lifetime, in part due to his own scholarship.

A second major reason for this historical journey is that I believe that it is necessary to understand one master *ḥadīth* scholar's vision prior to the formulation of 'theories' concerning the literature in

¹ Even the useful overview *Hadīth Literature: Its Origin, Development, and Special Features* by Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī sheds relatively little light on the on the historical development of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship, although it does identify most of the important published works of this literature.

general. There is a dangerous habit, as was indicated in the introduction, for Western scholars to read small clippings of a very wide range of large tomes without ever studying one author's book in its entirety. It is somewhat striking that an accessible, modest length book like *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, which has been published for at least a century, has never been analyzed as a composite whole, or read as al-Dhahabī's critical understanding of his own intellectual genealogy. This chapter, then, is an effort to grasp one insightful Muslim scholar's historical vision of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the hopes that it will illuminate the impact of the intense third/ninth century activity in *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism upon the subsequent centuries of Islamic civilization, as well as provide a solid reference point from which researchers can, in the future, develop their own theories concerning the development of this rich tradition.

III.2 Phase 1: Origins of *ḥadīth* (c. 1–140/622–757)

The founders of Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature are located among the generation of the authoritative *ṣaḥāba* and the three *ṭabaqāt* of *tābiʿūn*. The *ṣaḥāba* and their roles in *ḥadīth* transmission are discussed in great detail in chapters six and eight of this book, and so it is sufficient to recall here that al-Dhahabī singles out Abū Hurayra in *al-Muqīza* and only twenty-three people in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* for special attention. He also appears to have wholeheartedly embraced Ibn Ḥibbān's tripartite division of the *tābiʿūn*, and is not particularly concerned with them in the *Tadhkira*.² Abū Hurayra's son-in-law,

² The second *ṭabaqa* has only 42 entries, the third *ṭabaqa* consists of merely 30 men, and the fourth *ṭabaqa* has 58. Despite these small numbers, a remarkably high percentage of these transmitters contributed material to all of the 'six Sunnī *ḥadīth* books' according to al-Dhahabī. Examples of these indispensable men from the second *ṭabaqa* include the Kufans 'Alqama b. Qays, Masrūq b. al-Ajda', 'Abdīda b. 'Amr, al-Aswad b. Yazīd, Suwayd b. Ghafala, Zirr b. Ḥubaysh, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Laylā (father of the famous judge Ibn Abī Laylā), Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī, and Abū Wā'il; the Syrians Umm al-Dardā', Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī, and Qabīsa b. Dhu'ayb (originally from Medina); the Basrans Abū l-'Āliya l-Riyāhī, Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī, and Abū Rajā' al-'Uṭarīdī; and the Medinans 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, and Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Hārith; *Tadhkira*, I, 39–54. All thirty men of the fourth *ṭabaqa* passed on *ḥadīth* that were included in each of the 'six books'. Examples of master scholars from this generation include Abū l-Sha'thā' and Abū Qilāba of Basra; Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'tī, Sa'īd b. Jubayr, and al-Sha'bī of Kufa; 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Zayn al-'Ābidīn, 'Ubayd

Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, of Medina, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī are elevated among the masses of *tābiʿūn* listed over two pages of the *Tadhkira* at the end of the third *ṭabaqa*.³ These first three *ṭabaqāt* of scholars lived under the expansionist Umayyad rulers whom al-Dhahabī describes very favorably, although he does criticize the oppressive regime of al-Ḥajjāj (ruled 75–95/694–714) in Iraq.⁴

The members of the fourth *ṭabaqa* in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* were the final generation of scholars to have witnessed or studied with the *ṣaḥāba*. Most of them lived through the 'Abbāsīd revolution, and, as al-Dhahabī reminds us, the dawn of innovative religious ideas regarding free will and the nature of God.⁵ Two of the four Shuyūkh al-Islām of this *ṭabaqa*, the ascetic Muḥammad b. al-Munkadir (d. 130/747–8) and the *qāḍī* Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī (d. 143/760),⁶ flourished in Medina, which also happened to be the educational center for the Umayyad court scholar Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742).⁷ These

Allāh b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Utba, Sālim b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, 'Ikrima, and al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad of Medina; Mujāhid b. Jabr, 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāh, and Ibn Abī Mulayka of Mecca; Tāwūs and Wahb b. Munabbih of Yemen; Abū l-Khayr of Egypt; Khālīd b. Ma'dān of Ḥims; Maymūn b. Mihrān of Raqqa; and 'Abdullāh b. Burayda of Marw; *Tadhkira*, I, 57–78.

³ *Tadhkira*, I, 79–81. The relatively limited roles of Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in *ḥadīth* scholarship is discussed below in chapter eight; their brief entries can be found in the *Tadhkira*, I, 44 and 57.

⁴ *Tadhkira*, I, 56. It is remarkable that no mention is made of either the first or second *fitna* in this sketch; rather, the conquests under al-Walīd, as well as 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz's retreat from Constantinople, are praised. The importance of the first *fitna* is discussed below in chapter VI.2.

⁵ Al-Dhahabī explicitly mentions the following five 'innovators': the two founders of the Mu'tazila, 'Amr b. 'Ubayd (d. 144/761) and Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā' (d. 131/748), who were former students of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; Jahm b. Ṣafwān (d. 128/746), founder of *ta'tīl*, or the divesture of God of His attributes; and Muqātil b. Sulaymān (d. 150/767), the famous Qur'ānic exegete from Balḫ who was accused of anthropomorphism; *Tadhkira*, I, 119–20.

⁶ Yahyā l-Anṣārī is counted by Sufyān al-Thawrī as one of the 'four *huffāz*' of his generation; *Tadhkira*, I, 104 (the other three *huffāz* are Ismā'il b. Abī Khālīd, 'Āsim al-Aḥwal, and 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān; *ibid.*, I, 113). His teachers include the *ṣaḥābi* Anas b. Mālik, Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, and al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, while his pupils include Shu'ba, Mālik, Ibn al-Mubārak, and Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān.

⁷ *Tadhkira*, I, 95 (Muḥammad b. al-Munkadir) and 83 (al-Zuhrī). Al-Zuhrī was brought to the capital in Syria by 'Abd al-Malik and served the royal family in various capacities until his death during the reign of Hishām; see Michael Lecker, "Biographical Notes on Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 41 (1996), 21–63. Al-Dhahabī reports that al-Zuhrī's four majors sources (*buhūr*) were 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, and 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Utba; *Tadhkira*, I, 51. See below, chapter eight, for more details about these men who are usually counted among the "seven jurists of Medina." It is intriguing that al-Dhahabī does not consider al-Zuhrī a Shaykh al-Islām.

former two scholars studied with *ṣaḥāba* such as Abū Hurayra, Anas b. Mālik, and Ibn 'Abbās, and their students include several of the Shuyūkh al-Islām of the fifth *ṭabaqa*, such as Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Mālik b. Anas. Al-Zuhri studied with the *ṣaḥāba* who were young during the lifetime of the Prophet, such as Ibn 'Umar and Anas, and senior *tābi'ūn* like Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab. His students include major scholars of the fifth *ṭabaqa*, like al-Awzā'ī, al-Layth b. Sa'īd, and Mālik, as well as the sixth *ṭabaqa ḥadīth* master Sufyān b. 'Uyayna.⁸

The other major center of religious knowledge at this time, Iraq, enjoyed the erudition of the famous Qur'ān reciter and *ḥadīth* transmitter, al-A'mash (d. 148/765), in Kufa, and the *ḥadīth* scholars Sulaymān al-Taymī (d. 143/760) and Ibn 'Awn (d. 151/768) in Basra.⁹ Al-A'mash saw Anas b. Mālik and heard *ḥadīth* from the last living *ṣaḥābī* in Kufa, Ibn Abī Awfā (d. 86/705), in addition to important Kufan *tābi'ūn*, such as Abū Wā'il (d. around 100/718), Zirr b. Ḥubaysh (d. 81–3/700–3), and Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d. 95/714).¹⁰ His students include Sufyān al-Thawrī and Sufyān b. 'Uyayna, as well as the master Kufan scholars of *ḥadīth* like Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ and Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn.¹¹ Sulaymān al-Taymī also studied with the long-lived Anas b. Mālik, as well as the Shaykh al-Islām al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and his students include Shu'ba, the two Sufyāns,

⁸ Abū Dāwūd puts the number of reports transmitted by al-Zuhri at 2200, half of which were *ḥadīth*: *Tadhkira*, I, 83. Al-Dhahabī quotes Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion that the Zuhri material transmitted by the Syrian Shu'ayb b. Abī Ḥanẓala (d. 163/779–80) was superior to that of his two contemporaries 'Uqayl b. Khālīd (d. 144/761) and Yūnus b. Yazīd al-Aylī (d. 152/769); *Tadhkira* I, 162–3 (Shu'ayb), 121 ('Uqayl), and 122 (Yūnus). He adds that Shu'ayb wrote down al-Zuhri's dictations (*imlā'*) in an elegant script for the caliph Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik. Al-Bukhārī acquired some 200 Zuhri *ḥadīth* from Shu'ayb's pupil Abū l-Yamān al-Ḥakam b. Nāfi' (d. 221/836) in Hims; Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları* (Istanbul: Ibrahim Horoz Basimevi, 1956), 241 (#108). For al-Dhahabī's opinion of Abū l-Yamān, see *Tadhkira*, I, 301 (*ṭabaqa* 7).

⁹ *Tadhkira*, I, 116 (al-A'mash), 113 (Sulaymān al-Taymī), 117 (Ibn 'Awn). Two other major scholars of this *ṭabaqa* who lived in neither Medina nor Iraq are 'Amr b. Dīnār of Mecca and Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr of Yamāma; *ibid.*, I, 85 and 96, respectively. Special mention must also be made of the prolific Medinan Hishām b. 'Urwa who settled late in life in Baghdad and whom Ibn Ma'in declared equal in stature with al-Zuhri; *ibid.*, I, 108–9.

¹⁰ *Tadhkira*, I, 48 (Abū Wā'il), 46 (Zirr), 59 (Ibrāhīm).

¹¹ 'Alī al-Madīnī puts the number of al-A'mash's *ḥadīth* at 1300; *Tadhkira*, I, 116. For Wakī', see *ibid.*, II, 223; for Abū Nu'aym, see *ibid.*, II, 273. Other major Kufan scholars of the fourth *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* are Abū Ishāq al-Sab'ī, the 'Shaykh al-Kūfa' al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba, and Maṣ'ūr b. al-Mu'tamir; *ibid.*, I, 86–7, 88–9, and 107.

Ibn al-Mubārak and the master *ḥadīth* scholar of Wāsiṭ, Yazīd b. Hārūn. Ibn 'Awn's status as a *tābi'ī* is somewhat tenuous, as al-Dhahabī does not list any *ṣaḥāba* among his teachers; he did, however, study with preeminent *tābi'ūn* of Iraq, such as Abū Wā'il, Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī, and al-Sha'bī, as well as the famous Meccan pupil of Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid b. Jabr.¹² His pupils include Yazīd b. Hārūn and Shu'ba, the latter of whom claimed "I never saw anyone equal to Ayyūb [al-Sakhtiyānī], Ibn 'Awn, and Yūnus [b. 'Ubayd]."¹³

One final transformation that occurred at the end of Phase I during this fourth *ṭabaqa* and is articulated by al-Dhahabī is the transfer of knowledge from memory to books. He says: "Prior to this time, the knowledge of the *ṣaḥāba* and *tābi'ūn* was in the hearts, as they were storehouses of knowledge for them (May Allāh be pleased with them)."¹⁴ The impact of this transformation was felt almost immediately in the disciplines of *ḥadīth* compilation and can be seen to have ushered in a new era in our periodization of its history.

III.3 Phase 2: Early Compilation and Criticism (c. 140–200/757–815)

The second phase of the history of *ḥadīth* scholarship enjoys the highest number of Shuyūkh al-Islām in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, as well as some of the most important Qur'ān reciters, jurists, and historians (*akhbārīs*). Three of the five Shuyūkh al-Islām of the fifth *ṭabaqa*—al-Awzā'ī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Mālik b. Anas—inspired schools of Islamic law (*madhāhib*), and the latter's famous text, *al-Muwatṭa'*, continues to

¹² *Tadhkira*, I, 71 (Mujāhid).

¹³ *Tadhkira*, I, 117–8. These latter two scholars were pupils of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Muḥammad b. Sīrīn. Al-Dhahabī evaluates Ayyūb b. Abī Tamīm al-Sakhtiyānī as Imām and Yūnus b. 'Ubayd al-'Abdī as Imām, *ḥujja*; *ibid.*, I, 98 and 109. 'Alī b. al-Madīnī estimates the number of *ḥadīth* transmitted by Ayyūb at 800; *ibid.*, I, 98. Another significant Basran *ḥāfiẓ* of the fourth *ṭabaqa* is Qatāda b. Di'āma; *ibid.*, I, 92–3.

¹⁴ *wa innamā kāna qabla dhālika 'ilmu l-ṣaḥābati wa l-tābi'īna fī l-ṣudūri fa-hiya kānat khazā'ina l-'ilmi lahum, raḍiya Allāhu 'anhum*; *Tadhkira*, I, 120. The survival of Muqātil b. Sulaymān's *tafsīr* and the *Sīra* of Ibn Ishāq seem to support al-Dhahabī's assertion. See also al-Tirmidhī's observation that the earliest compilations (*taṣnīf*) were by the students of the scholars of this phase, such as Hishām b. Ḥassān (d. 148/765), Ibn Jurayj, Sa'īd b. Abī 'Arūba, Mālik, Ḥammād b. Salama, Ibn al-Mubārak, Yahyā b. Abī Zā'ida, Wakī' and Ibn Mahdī; al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ wa huwa Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, V (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, no date), 738.

be venerated by Sunnī scholars of all schools of law to this day.¹⁵ The remaining two Shuyūkh al-Islām, Shu'ba and Ḥammād b. Salama, cemented Basra's reputation as a major *ḥadīth* center and transmitted thousands of *ḥadīth* that can be found in all of the major Sunnī collections.¹⁶ Egypt's first significant *ḥadīth* scholar, al-Layth b. Sa'd (d. 175/791), flourished at this time, as did the master of analogical reasoning and eponym of a *madhhab*, Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767), in Kufa.¹⁷ This generation coincided with the early florescence of the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, although the new capital Baghdad did not have a dominant role in the venture of *ḥadīth* transmission until the next, third phase.

¹⁵ Al-Awzā'ī's books appear to be lost, although many of his opinions can be found in *al-Umm* of al-Shāfi'ī and several of his epistles are preserved in the *Taqdīm* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim. A recent study of al-Awzā'ī's legal opinions is Anke Bouzenita, *'Abdarrahmān al-Awzā'ī: ein Rechtsgelehrter des 2. Jahrhunderts d. H. und sein Beitrag zu den Siyar* (Berlin, 2001). Ibn al-Nadīm mentions several books of Sufyān al-Thawrī, none of which is extant; *Kutāb al-fihrist li-l-Nadīm*, ed. Reza Tajaddod (Tehran, n.d.), 281. Al-Tirmidhī includes many of al-Thawrī's legal opinions in his canonical *Jāmi'*, and he identifies his source for this material as Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān al-Kūfī (d. 256/870) who was a bookbinder (*warraq*) for al-Thawrī's pupil 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mūsā (d. 213/828); *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, V, 736. (For Muḥammad b. 'Uthmān, also known as Ibn Karāma, see al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, XII, 296–8; for 'Ubayd Allāh, see *Tadhkira*, I, 259.) Other important sources for al-Thawrī's legal opinions and transmitted materials include the *Muṣannaḥ*s of 'Abd al-Razzāq (see Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 58–62) and Ibn Abī Shayba, as well as the *ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'* works of Ibn al-Mundhir and al-Ṭaḥāwī (abridged by al-Jassās). Murāyī mentions that al-Thawrī's *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* made it to al-Andalus via 'Alī b. Ziyād (d. 183/799) and Shajara b. 'Isā al-Ma'āfirī of Qayrawān; Murāyī, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hadīth- und Rechtsgelehrsamkeit der Mālikīyya in Nordafrika bis zum 5. Jh. D. H.*, (Wiesbaden, 1997), 9–10 and 66–7. Yasin Dutton has published a useful study of the *Muwatta'* called *The Origins of Islamic Law* (Richmond Surrey, 1999); see pp. 22–24 of his book for a description of nine recensions of this text.

¹⁶ For more on Shu'ba, see below chapter IV.4.2. Ḥammād b. Salama, as I mentioned earlier, is credited by al-Dhahabī (along with Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba), with composing the first "categorical compilations" (*taṣnīf*), none of which appear to have survived; *Tadhkira*, I, 151. Several other critically important Basran *ḥadīth* scholars of this *ṭabaqa* are Ḥishām al-Dastawā'ī, Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba, Ma'mar b. Rāshid, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Wuhayb b. Khālīd; *ibid.*, I, 124, 133–4, 143, 167–8, and 172–3. Major Kufans of the fifth *ṭabaqa* in addition to Sufyān al-Thawrī include Mi'sār b. Kidām, Zā'ida b. Qudāma, al-Ḥasan b. Šāliḥ, Sharīk b. 'Abdullāh, and Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya; *ibid.*, I, 141–2, 158, 159, 170, 171.

¹⁷ *Tadhkira*, I, 165 (al-Layth), 126 (Abū Ḥanīfa). Al-Dhahabī identifies one of al-Layth's teachers, Abū Rajā' Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128/746), as the first scholar to bring religious knowledge of a legal nature (*al-'ilm wa l-mas'āl wa l-ḥalāl wa l-ḥarām*) to Egypt, which in turn replaced the earlier *ḥadīth* that were limited to exhortations to piety (*targhīb*) and apocalyptic calamities at the end of time (*al-malāḥim wa fitan*); *Tadhkira*, I, 97. Yazīd studied with several master scholars of the Hijāz, such as Sa'id b. Abī Hind, 'Ikrima, Nāfi', and 'Aṭā b. Abī Rabāḥ; *Siyar*, VI, 10.

Al-Dhahabī reminds us in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* that the middle *ṭabaqa* of this phase includes scholars who witnessed the destructive Amīn-Ma'mūn civil war (the fourth *fitna*), as well as the phenomenal rise of speculative theology (*kalām*), and the Arabization of Greek philosophy.¹⁸ Despite the rapid spread of the 'cancer' of speculation, more Shuyūkh al-Islām are identified in this *ṭabaqa* than in any other. Mecca was graced with the towering figures of Sufyān b. 'Uyayna (d. 198/813) and al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād (d. 187/803) from Khurāsān.¹⁹ The master Qur'ān reciter and *ḥadīth*-transmitter Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh (d. 193/809) taught in Kufa, and Yazīd b. Hārūn (d. 206/821) transmitted large amounts of *ḥadīth* in nearby Wāsiṭ.²⁰ The remaining two Shuyūkh al-Islām, Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī (d. 185/801) and Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), settled in the frontier city of Maṣṣīṣa, where they set the tone for *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and asceticism.²¹

¹⁸ *Tadhkira*, I, 240. For a new introduction to the history of the translation movement that translated nearly the entire classical Greek corpus from Syriac into Arabic from the time of the caliph al-Manṣūr until the fourth/tenth century, see Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (New York, Routledge, 1998). It is somewhat puzzling as to why al-Dhahabī discusses the infamous *miḥna* in this historical sketch, since most of the scholars who were tried are located in the eighth *ṭabaqa*. Perhaps he is doing so with the hopes of indicating the perilous outcome of the study of speculative theology?

¹⁹ *Tadhkira*, I, 193 (Ibn 'Uyayna), 180 (al-Fuḍayl). The long-lived Ibn 'Uyayna was of Kufan origins, but lived almost his entire life in Mecca. He was one of al-Zuhrī's youngest pupils, and shared *ḥadīth* with several of his teachers, such as al-A'mash and Shu'ba. His pupils include Ibn al-Mubārak, al-Shāfi'ī, and most major scholars of the generation of Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Ma'in (*ṭabaqa* 8). Al-Fuḍayl was born in Samarqand and educated in Kufa. His students include his contemporaries Ibn al-Mubārak, Yahyā b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān, and al-Qa'nabī. The quality of his *ḥadīth* was criticized by 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Mahdī who declared him to be less than a *ḥāfiḥ*; *ibid.*, I, 180. Note that both men are two of the only scholars whom al-Dhahabī lauds with the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām in his three major works *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, *Siyar al-'ālam al-nubalā'*, and *Tārīkh al-Islām*.

²⁰ *Tadhkira*, I, 194 (Ibn 'Ayyāsh), 231 (Yazīd). Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh has the distinction of being one of the few Qur'ān reciters to have been both a pupil and teacher of two of the seven canonical Qur'ān reciters ('Āṣim and al-Kisā'ī, respectively). He studied *ḥadīth* with major Kufan *ṭābi'ūn*, like Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī, and taught Ibn al-Mubārak, Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, and Ibn Ḥanbal. Yazīd b. Hārūn's students include major eighth *ṭabaqa* compilers, such as Ibn Ḥanbal, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Abū Khaythama, and Ibn Abī Shayba. The strict critic Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī declared him to be *thiqa*, *imām*; *ibid.*, I, 232. He also is reported to have gone blind at the end of his life.

²¹ *Tadhkira*, I, 200 (Abū Ishāq), 202 (Ibn al-Mubārak). Abū Ishāq taught both Ibn al-Mubārak and al-Awzā'ī, and held classes in Damascus as well as Maṣṣīṣa. Ibn al-Mubārak's global list of teachers and students is "immeasurable" according to al-Dhahabī, who also notes Ibn al-Mubārak's composition of books into chapters (*dawwana l-'ilma fi l-abwāb*) on the topics of *fiqh*, warfare (*ghazw*), asceticism, and

Other leading scholars of this generation include the previously mentioned master *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān of Basra, and the exceptionally gifted *ḥadīth* memorizer, Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāh (d. 197/813) of Kufa.²²

The continuous primacy of Iraq during the second phase can be gleaned from the list of the Shuyūkh of Islām of the seventh *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, from which one can detect a shift from Kufa to Basra during this time.²³ The master Qurʾān reciter al-Ḥusayn al-Juʿfī (d. 203/818–9) flourished in Kufa, while Basra was adorned with Abū ʿĀṣim al-Ḍaḥḥāk (d. 212/827), Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muqrī (d. 213/828), and al-Qaʿnabī (d. 221/836), the latter two who lived their final years in Mecca. Al-Ḥusayn al-Juʿfī studied the Qurʾān with the canonical reader Ḥamza b. Ḥabīb (d. 156/773), and transmitted a portion of the vast reservoir of al-Aʿmash's and Sufyān al-Thawrī's *ḥadīth* to the likes of Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Rāhawayh.²⁴ Abū ʿĀṣim is reported to have taught the material of Sulaymān al-Taymī and Ibn Jurayj,²⁵ among others, to Ibn Ḥanbal,

"softening the heart" (*raqāʿiq*). Note that his famous book of ascetic *ḥadīth* and reports entitled *Kitāb al-zuhd* has been published. Ibn al-Mubārak lived the archetypical life of the militant ascetic, and consequently found martyrdom in battle on the frontier with Byzantium.

²² *Tadhkira*, I, 218 (Yahyā), 223 (Wakīʿ). Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān studied with several Shuyūkh al-Islām, including Sulaymān al-Taymī and al-Aʿmash, and counted among his students Ibn Mahdī, Ibn Ḥanbal, ʿAffān b. Muslim, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Rāhawayh. ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī praises him for his exceptional knowledge of *ḥadīth* transmitters (*rijāl*). Wakīʿ was a student of al-Aʿmash, Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Awzāʿī, and Ibn ʿAwn and "gave *fatwas* in accordance with the opinions of Abū Ḥanīfa" (*yufī bi-qawli Abi Hanifa*). His students include most of the Shuyūkh al-Islām of the eighth *ṭabaqa*, as well as Ibn Abī Shayba, who appears to have incorporated much of Wakīʿ's non-extant *muṣannaf* in his own massive book with the same title. Despite a mastery of *fiqh*, Wakīʿ is reported to have made numerous grammatical errors and barbarisms (*alḥān*) in his transmissions; *ibid.*, I, 223.

²³ One of the subtle and substantial differences between the sixth and seventh *ṭabaqāt* of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* is that the none of the scholars in the sixth *ṭabaqa* appears to have lived long enough to teach either al-Bukhārī or Muslim, whereas nearly thirty of al-Bukhārī's most senior teachers are found in the seventh *ṭabaqa*. Examples of these men, about whom I will have more to say in the fifth chapter, include Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firyābī, ʿAffān b. Muslim, Sulaymān b. Ḥarb, Abū Salama al-Tabūdhakī, ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd, Abū Ghassān Mālik b. Ismāʿīl, and Khālid b. Makhḥad; *Tadhkira*, I, 273–4, 275, 278–9, 287–8, 289, 294, 295, and 298. Note that al-Bukhārī includes *ḥadīth* from these latter two Kufans in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* despite their unabashed sympathies for ʿAlī (*tashayyu*).

²⁴ *Tadhkira*, I, 255.

²⁵ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. Jurayj (d. 150/767) is called ʿFaḥīh al-Ḥaramī by al-Dhahabī and was a pupil of the prominent jurist ʿAṭā b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114/732) as well as ʿAmr b. Dīnār (d. 126/744), and al-Zuhri. He taught the two

al-Dārimī, and al-Bukhārī from memory.²⁶ Al-Muqrī seems to have earned his *nisba* from his close association with the canonical Qurʾān reciter Nāfiʿ b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Madanī (d. 167/784), and claimed to have taught Qurʾān in Basra and Mecca for thirty-six and thirty-five years, respectively.²⁷ Al-Qaʿnabī, who was born in Medina, studied in Basra, and then adopted an ascetic lifestyle in Mecca. He was renowned for his unique edition of Mālik's *Muwattaʿa*, which he obtained from the master directly without the interference of his reciter, Ḥabīb.²⁸ Finally, the one non-Iraqi Shaykh al-Islām of this *ṭabaqa*, Muḥammad al-Šūrī al-Qalānasī (d. 215/830), was another pupil of Mālik and described by his student Ibn Maʿīn as the "Shaykh of Damascus and second to Abū Mushir (d. 218/833)."²⁹

Several other scholars of this generation merit special attention. Two more Basran scholars of particular acumen in the disciplines of *ḥadīth* transmission and criticism were ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/814) and the compiler of one of the earliest *musnad* books, Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 203/819).³⁰ Ṣanʿā, the remote capital of

Sufyāns, Wakīʿ, and ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Šanʿānī; *Tadhkira*, I, 128. For a detailed analysis of the portions of his book preserved in ʿAbd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf*, see Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, in particular see pp. 206–44 (his sources) and 268–85 (his depiction in the classical Islamic biographical literature).

²⁶ *Tadhkira*, I, 268–9. His proper name is al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Makhḥad.

²⁷ *Tadhkira*, I, 269. Al-Muqrī also studied *ḥadīth* with the Basran masters Ibn ʿAwn and Shuʿba, and passed this knowledge on to al-Bukhārī, Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Rāhawayh, and ʿAbbās al-Dūrī. Al-Dhahabī mentions that his primary educator in the discipline of *fiqh* was Abū Ḥanīfa.

²⁸ *Tadhkira*, I, 281. Ibn Saʿd reports that Mālik would conduct his classes in his senior years by having his slave Ḥabīb recite his books to the students in attendance, and would only interrupt Ḥabīb when he made an error; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubra*, V, 289. Al-Zurqānī (d. 1122/1710) reports that Ibn Maʿīn, Ibn al-Madīnī, and al-Nasāʿī were of the opinion that the most authoritative transmitter/compiler of the *Muwattaʿa* was al-Qaʿnabī; see *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī ʿalā Muwattaʿa Imām Mālik*, I (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, no date), 11. Al-Dhahabī includes Ibn Maʿīn's opinion that the two most reliable (*athbat*) recensions of the *Muwattaʿa* were those of al-Qaʿnabī and the Syrian ʿAbdullāh b. Yūsuf al-Kalāʿī (d. 218/833); *Tadhkira*, I, 296. Several recensions of the *Muwattaʿa* are discussed below in chapter five.

²⁹ *Tadhkira*, I, 283. Abū Mushir ʿAbd al-Aʿlā b. Mushir al-Ghassānī al-Dimashqī was also a student of Mālik and is famous for having been violently coerced into declaring the Qurʾān to be created during the *miḥna* instigated by al-Maʿmūn. He died in prison after a hundred days of incarceration. Al-Dhahabī declares him to be *Shaykh ahl al-Shām wa ʿālimuhum*; *ibid.*, I, 279–80.

³⁰ *Tadhkira*, I, 241 (Ibn Mahdī), and 257 (al-Ṭayālīsī). Al-Dhahabī reports Ibn Ḥanbal as saying that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī was better at *fiqh* than Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and more reliable (*athbat*) with *ḥadīth* than Wakīʿ because he was more familiar with writing it down (*aqrabu ʿahdan bi-l-kitāb*). His teachers include Shuʿba and Sufyān al-Thawrī, and most major scholars of the eighth *ṭabaqa* can be found

Yemen, hosted a brief florescence of a group of *ḥadīth* scholars that included Ibn Jurayj, Ma'mar b. Rāshid (d. 153/770) and, very briefly, Sufyān al-Thawrī, the fruits of which have been preserved in the massive *Muṣannaf* and substantial *Tafsīr* of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/826).³¹ Two of Ibn Sa'd's primary teachers, both of whom were considered weak in *ḥadīth* but invaluable in history (*akhbār*) and genealogy, are Hishām Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 206/822) and Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/823), and it is interesting that al-Dhahabī includes both of them in the *Tadhkira* with, of course, the caveat that their *ḥadīth* is not to be trusted.³² Finally, the scholar whose theories of jurisprudence left an irrevocable stamp on Islamic thought, Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī, composed his most important works in Egypt during this period and receives the unique accolade of the "Rabbi of the Community" (*ḥibr al-umma*) in the *Tadhkira*.³³ Although

among his pupils. Abū Dāwūd al-Tayālīsī was a companion of Ibn Maḥdī, and received strong praise from the critic al-Fallās. However, al-Dhahabī warns us that he made several errors when he dictated from memory. Ṣiddīqī notes that al-Tayālīsī's *Musnad* consists of 2,767 *ḥadīth* and argues that its actual compiler was al-Tayālīsī's pupil Yūnus b. Ḥabīb (d. 267/880) of Isfahan; *Ḥadīth Literature*, 45 and al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, XII, 596–7 (*rawā 'an Abī Dāwūd al-Tayālīsī musnadan fī mujallad kabīr*). Note that Ibn 'Adī is quoted as identifying the earliest *musnad* in Kufa as the work of Yahyā b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥimānī (d. 228/843) and in Basra as the *musnad* of Musaddad b. Musarhad (d. 228/843); *ibid.*, II, 8–10. See below, chapter V.2.6, for more details about these two men.

³¹ *Tadhkira*, I, 142 (Ma'mar b. Rāshid), 266 ('Abd al-Razzāq). Ma'mar was a student of Zuhri and the Basran Qatāda b. Di'āma (d. 117/735; *ibid.*, I, 92), and transmitted *ḥadīth* to major scholars such as the two Sufyāns. 'Abd al-Razzāq claims to have studied with Ma'mar for seven years and is reported to have been a proponent of moderate *tashayyu'* who "loved 'Alī and despised those who fought him." See the groundbreaking study of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* by Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*. Yemen more or less disappeared from the map, so to speak, of *ḥadīth* transmission and compilation after Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ma'in and other Iraqis sojourned there to obtain the *Muṣannaf* from 'Abd al-Razzāq and to study with his contemporary, the *qāḍī* of Ṣan'ā, Hishām b. Yūsuf (d. 197/813; *Tadhkira*, I, 253). I have come across only one other Yemeni in the *Tadhkira*—Rabī'a b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 609/1212–3)—although he became prominent for his work in Isfahan; *ibid.*, IV, 124.

³² *Tadhkira*, I, 250 (Ibn al-Kalbī) and 254 (al-Wāqidi).

³³ *Tadhkira*, I, 265. It is somewhat astonishing that al-Dhahabī, a purported adherent to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, does not honor al-Shāfi'ī with the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām. Perhaps it was his revulsion to the crass *madhhab* partisanship of his day that led him to do this, or else, the fact that al-Shāfi'ī was somewhat limited in his *ḥadīth* transmissions. Note al-Dhahabī's warning after praising al-Shāfi'ī's knowledge of *ḥadīth* defects (*ilal*): "no [*ḥadīth*] is accepted from him except that which is reliable on his authority; had he lived longer, [the number of his *ḥadīth*] would have increased" (*lā yuqbalu minhu illā mā thabata 'anhu; wa law fāla 'umruhu, la-'zādā minhu; ibid.*, I, 265). The topic of al-Shāfi'ī's *ḥadīth* expertise is discussed in some detail below in chapter IV.5.

only a few major books of the master scholars of the second phase of *ḥadīth* transmission were ever composed or have survived, the massive collections of *ḥadīth* and *āthār* of men such as Shu'ba and Yazīd b. Hārūn served as the raw materials for the most authoritative *ḥadīth* books in Sunnī Islām that were synthesized by the scholars of the third phase.

III.4 Phase 3: The age of the "six books" (c. 200–300/815–912)

The borders that have been adopted for this phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship are indicated by al-Dhahabī himself, who limits the second volume of *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* to the eighth through tenth *ṭabaqāt*. Two salient trends characterize this century of energetic *ḥadīth* compilation and synthesis: systematic transmitter-criticism and globalization. The former was necessary in order to distinguish the most reliable material from that which was obscure and spurious. It relied primarily upon two processes: 1) the collection of a vast quantity of *ḥadīth* in order to discern the unique, obscure, or impossible details and expressions from the core text, later called *ṭaraf* (plural is *aṭrāf*); 2) an extraordinary knowledge of the approximate birth and exact death dates, teachers, students, and probity of every name found in tens of thousands of *isnāds*. A total lifetime's dedication to this task was a prerequisite for this awesome task, and the relatively small number of scholars who became recognized as authorities in *ḥadīth* scholarship indicates the hardships this achievement involved.³⁴

The second trend of the third phase, globalization, is a much more complex phenomenon that cannot yet be explained satisfactorily. The destabilizing events in the central lands of Islam during this time—the 'anarchy of Samarra,' Zanj revolt, and the Ṣaffārid adventures in Iraq and Khurāsān—seem to have contributed to the decline of the earlier *ḥadīth* centers of Basra and Kufa, and led to a consolidation of this activity in the cosmopolitan city of Baghdad. Most, if not all, great scholars, passed through Baghdad at one time or another, in order to acquire knowledge and disseminate it back home in Syria, Iran, Transoxania, or al-Andalus. The cities of Mosul, Rayy, Qazvin, Nishapur, Herat, Samarqand, Bukhara and even

³⁴ This topic is explored in great detail in the following chapter.

Cordoba blossomed with highly erudite *ḥadīth* scholars and critics during this period. How much this global network was due to economic factors, such as trade between these major cities, or to the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, or to a religious zeal, bordering on obsession, to collect as much of this sacred material as possible, is a question that is beyond the pale of this book. All that can be said with certainty is that the diffusion of *ḥadīth* literature to the furthest corners of the Islamic world in the third/ninth century was not due to any perceivable government intervention, or, as some have suggested, the legal theories of al-Shāfiʿī, but rather must be seen as the result of a number of highly pious, erudite, and devoted *individual* scholars who, through their process of *ḥadīth* acquisition, composed several of the most fundamental books of Sunnī Islam.

The third phase commences with the eighth *ṭabaqa* of the *Tadhkira*, which is the largest one in the entire book and of particular interest for this project.³⁵ The first Shaykh al-Islām hailing from Baghdad, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, anchors this generation, and his life and teachings inspired both a legal school and theological persuasion that bear his name.³⁶ The remaining two Shuyūkh al-Islām flourished in the traditional cities of *ḥadīth* scholarship of Damascus and Kufa. Hishām b. ʿAmmār (d. 245/859–60), yet another student of Mālik b. Anas, served as the *khaṭīb*, Qurʾān reciter, *ḥadīth*-transmitter, and *muftī* of Damascus and passed *ḥadīth* on to al-Bukhārī, Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, and al-Nasāʾī.³⁷ The second of these master scholars, ʿAbdullāh b. Saʿīd al-Ashajj (d. 257/871), studied with Abū Bakr b. ʿAyyāsh, taught two of the Shuyūkh al-Islām of the eleventh *ṭabaqa*, Ibn

³⁵ Many members of this *ṭabaqa* are discussed in greater detail below in chapter V.2.

³⁶ Ibn Hanbal has attracted a fair amount of Western scholarly attention: for his school of law, see Christopher Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law*, 137–55 and Nimrod Hurvitz, *The Formation of Hanbalism* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002); for actual legal opinions, see Susan A. Spector, *Chapters on Marriage and Divorce: Responses of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Rāḥawayh* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993); for his theology see Madelung, “The Origins of the Controversy Concerning the Creation of the Koran” in *Orientalia hispanica: sive studia F. M. Pareja octogenarian dicta I: Arabica Islamica*, ed. J. M. Barral (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 504–25. Another useful work is George Makdisi’s essay “Hanbalite Islam” in *Studies on Islam*, ed. and trans. by Merlin L. Schwartz (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 216–52. For details of his role in *ḥadīth* scholarship, see below chapters V.4.3, VI.4.3, and VII.4.

³⁷ *Tadhkira*, II, 79.

Khuzayma and Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and composed, among other works, a moderately famous Qurʾānic exegesis (*tafsīr*).³⁸

The importance of this *ṭabaqa* for the art of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism is evidenced by the fact that it is the location of the first substantial group of authorities cited in al-Dhahabī’s *Mizān al-ʾitidāl*.³⁹ Ibn Ḥanbal, ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn and Abū Khaythama (d. 234/848) established the primacy of Baghdad in this discipline.⁴⁰ The final member of this group, ʿAmr b. ʿAlī al-Fallās (d. 249/863), transmitted *ḥadīth* to all six of the canonical compilers, as well as such prominent scholars as Abū Zurʿa al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn Sāʿid.⁴¹ Despite the fact that only ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī appears to have written organized books on *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism at this time, the students of these scholars, such as al-Bukhārī, ʿAbbās al-Dūrī, and Abū Saʿīd ʿUthmān al-Dārimī, often arranged their myriad opinions into functional texts.⁴²

Four other scholars of this *ṭabaqa* demand mention for their influence upon Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature. Abū Bakr ʿAbdullāh b. al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219/834) composed one of the earliest *musnads* in Mecca, and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī considered him the most reliable source of Ibn ʿUyayna’s *ḥadīth*.⁴³ Ibn Saʿīd composed *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* by

³⁸ *Tadhkira*, II, 66. None of his works appears to have survived; see *GAS*, I, 134.

³⁹ See above, Table 2.1.

⁴⁰ *Tadhkira*, II, 13 (Ibn al-Madīnī), 14 (Ibn Maʿīn), and 19 (Abū Khaythama). ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī grew up in Baṣra and studied with Ḥammād b. Zayd and Sufyān b. ʿUyayna. His numerous students include al-Bukhārī, al-Dhuhli, Abū Dāwūd, and Ismāʿīl al-Qāḍī. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī described him as “a sign of the knowledge of *ḥadīth* and its defects among the people” (*kāna Ibn al-Madīnī ʿalaman fi l-nās fi maʾrifat al-ḥadīth wa l-ʾilāl*). Ibn Maʿīn is discussed in detail below in chapters V.4.2 and VII.3. He appears to have been the most important source of *ḥadīth* transmitter-criticism of his generation for the Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Abī Ḥātim. Abū Khaythama Zuhayr b. Ḥarb also studied with Ibn ʿUyayna, among others, and taught al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Abū Dāwūd. Al-Dhahabī calls him “the *Muḥaddith* of Baghdad.”

⁴¹ *Tadhkira*, II, 56. Al-Fallās studied with Sufyān b. ʿUyayna, among others, and was evaluated by al-Nasāʾī as *thiqā*, *ḥāfiẓ*, *ṣāhib al-ḥadīth*. He died in Sāmarrā, and al-Dhahabī mentions that he made many trips to Isfahan.

⁴² Perhaps the best example of this practice is Abū ʿUthmān al-Dārimī’s recension of the *Tārīkh* of Ibn Maʿīn, in which he discusses the relative merits of the students of 11 prominent *tabīʿūn* in the first part, and then arranges the remaining 874 scholars alphabetically. This is in sharp contrast to the largest compilation of Ibn Maʿīn’s opinions, the *Tārīkh* compiled by ʿAbbās al-Dūrī, which is loosely arranged by geographical categories, but lacks any discernable internal organization. These recensions are discussed below in chapter V.4.2.

⁴³ *Tadhkira*, II, 3–4. The published edition of al-Ḥumaydī’s *Musnad* edited by Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-Aʿzamī consists of 1300 *ḥadīth* in two volumes (Karachi, 1963). The organization of this *Musnad* is slightly different from the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal;

synthesizing the material of not just Ibn al-Kalbī and al-Wāqidī, but also Yazīd b. Hārūn, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh, Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, and 'Affān b. Muslim.⁴⁴ The Kufan Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Shayba (d. 235/849) composed his enormous *Muṣannaf* from the material he obtained from Ibn al-Mubārak, Ibn 'Uyayna, Wakī' and scores of other men found in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*,⁴⁵ and his students include Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and the first Andalusī Shaykh al-Islām, Baqīyy b. Makhḷad.⁴⁶ Finally, the Marwazī 'Shaykh of the East,' Ibn Rāhawayh (d. 238/853), studied with al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ and others, prior to settling in Nishapur. His students include all of the six canonical compilers, except Ibn Māja, and it is he whom the Sunnī tradition credits with the suggestion to a young Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī to compile a concise book consisting solely of authoritative (*ṣaḥīḥ*) *ḥadīth*.⁴⁷

The transformation of Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature from a somewhat disorganized, oral-written tradition to one based upon rigorously researched and categorically organized books was completed during the ninth and tenth *ṭabaqāt* of the third phase. Al-Dhahabī identifies five Shuyūkh al-Islām, as well as several other scholars, who contributed significantly to this project. The most famous of these is Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870), whose early journey

for example, the *ḥadīth* of female Companions are closer to the front, and the first ten entries include the 'ten promised paradise' with the curious substitution of Ibn Mas'ūd for Talḥa.

⁴⁴ *Tadhkira*, II, 11. Ibn Sa'd lists his important sources on p. 5 of volume III, of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, and the significance of the other listed names can be ascertained from the *isnāds* throughout the text. Ibn al-Nadīm's assertion in the *Fihrist* that Ibn Sa'd merely synthesized the writings of al-Wāqidī, [Ibn] al-Kalbī, al-Haytham b. 'Adī, and al-Madā'inī obscures the significance of the role of the master *ḥadīth* scholars in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*; *al-Fihrist*, 112. For more details, see below, chapters V.4.1, VI.4.2, and VII.2.

⁴⁵ Other prominent contributors to Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf* include the previously mentioned 'Affān b. Muslim and Yazīd b. Hārūn, as well as men such as Jarīr b. 'Abd al-Hamīd, 'Abd al-Rahīm b. Sulaymān, Abū Mu'āwiya al-Darīr, Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth, Abū Usāma Ḥammād b. Usāma, Ibn 'Ulayya, and Ibn Numayr; *Tadhkira*, I, 199, 213, 215, 217, 234, 235–6, 239.

⁴⁶ *Tadhkira*, II, 17. The 1995 uncritical Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya edition of Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf* contains 37,930 *ḥadīth* and *āthār* in thirty-eight chapters (*kutub*). The largest chapters are devoted to prayer, sales, and pilgrimage. This text appears to be the recension transmitted by Baqīyy b. Makhḷad. Two fragments of Ibn Abī Shayba's *Musnad* have also been published recently in Riyadh.

⁴⁷ *Tadhkira*, II, 18. This story is mentioned with a complete *isnād* at the opening of Ibn Hajar's introduction to his commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī; see *Hady al-sārī muqaddimat fath al-bārī* (Beirut, 1996), 7.

with his mother in the quest for knowledge brought him in contact with luminaries such as 'Affān b. Muslim in Baghdad, the Shaykh al-Islām al-Muqrī in Mecca, and Abū Mushir in Damascus.⁴⁸ Al-Bukhārī's two most important books are his *Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ* and *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, although he composed many short books that have been preserved to this day.⁴⁹ The roster of al-Bukhārī's students includes major scholars of the tenth *ṭabaqa* such as al-Tirmidhī, Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī, Ibn Khuzayma, Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad Jazara, Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Ibn Ṣā'id, Abū Ḥamid Ibn al-Sharqī, and the primary transmitter of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firabrī (d. 320/932).⁵⁰ Al-Bukhārī's books seem to have achieved a prestigious status from an early date, as we find many scholars of the fourth/tenth century subjecting them to rigorous analysis and meticulous transmission.

Baghdad maintained its prominence in the disciplines of *ḥadīth* erudition during the ninth *ṭabaqa*. The Shaykh al-Islām Abū Ishāq al-Harbī (d. 285/898) studied *ḥadīth* with al-Faḍl b. Dukayn and 'Affān b. Muslim, and is counted among one of Ibn Ḥanbal's finest companions in the field of *fiqh*.⁵¹ His pupils reflect his expertise in the disciplines of *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, and *adab*, for they include the Baghdādī Ibn Ṣā'id and the master philologist Tha'lab (d. 291/904). Ismā'īl al-Qāḍī (d. 282/895), a great-great grandson of the Basran master *ḥadīth* scholar Ḥammād b. Zayd, was a master of the Mālikī *madh-hab* and acquired the *Muwatta'* from the Shaykh al-Islām al-Qa'nabī.⁵² He appears to have been very interested in the disciplines of the Qur'ān, in addition to *ḥadīth* and Mālikī jurisprudence, and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī mentions three titles of works in this field that appear

⁴⁸ *Tadhkira*, II, 104. Other important teachers explicitly mentioned by al-Dhahabī are Abū l-Mughīra and al-Firyābī in Syria, Ādam in 'Asqalan, and Abū l-Yamān in Hims. Bukhārī is also purported to have memorized Ibn al-Mubārak's works as a child. For a quantitative analysis of al-Bukhārī's sources, see Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 203–304.

⁴⁹ See *Hady al-sārī*, 680–2. The 1996 Dār al-Fikr edition of Ibn Hajar's commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī entitled *Fath al-bārī bi-sharḥ ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* includes 7563 *ḥadīth* and *āthār* with repetitions in 97 chapters. Ibn Hajar counts only 2602 *ḥadīth* after the consolidation of repetitions; *ibid.*, 659–63.

⁵⁰ Al-Firabrī does not receive an entry in the *Tadhkira* but can be found in al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, XV, 10.

⁵¹ *Tadhkira*, II, 123.

⁵² *Tadhkira*, II, 149. His full name is Abū Ishāq Ismā'īl b. Ishāq. See also Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 170–5.

to be lost.⁵³ Finally, Aḥmad b. Abī Khaythama (d. 279/892) followed in his father's footsteps and composed a large history, a fragment of which recently has been published.⁵⁴ Al-Khaṭīb's description of his education vividly illustrates the intellectual richness of the 'Abbāsid capital during this time.⁵⁵

He received his knowledge of *ḥadīth* from Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Ma'in, of genealogy from Muṣ'ab [al-Zubayrī; d. 236/851], of history from 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. 224/839), and of literature (*adab*) from Muḥammad b. Sallām al-Jumahlī (d. 231/846).

A final major scholar of Baghdad whom we shall be looking at more closely in chapter five is 'Abbās al-Dūrī (d. 271/884–5), a disciple of Ibn Ma'in, who not only synthesized the *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism opinions of his master, but also taught all four compilers of the canonical *ṣunan* books during their individual visits to Baghdad.⁵⁶

The city of Rayy also flourished as a center of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism at this time due to the learning of three of its sons.⁵⁷ Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 277/890), one of the critics considered by al-Dhahabī to have been 'severe' in his opinions, studied with important figures such as 'Affān and al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, and had the good fortune to have a son who devoted himself to the alphabetical organization of his knowledge in the famous book *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*.⁵⁸ Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī (d. 264/878) is honored by al-Dhahabī with the sobriquet 'Hāfiẓ of the Age' and acquired an extraordinary volume of *ḥadīth* from al-Qa'nabī, al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, Ibn Abī Shayba, and al-Fallās, among many others.⁵⁹ His students include the famous com-

pilars Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Māja, Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Abū 'Awāna, and Ibn Abī Ḥātim. The third member of this trio of master Rāzī *ḥadīth* scholars is Ibn Wāra (d. 270/883–4), a pupil of the Shaykh al-Islām Abū 'Āṣim and al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, as well as teacher of al-Bukhārī, al-Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.⁶⁰

Further east, the Khurāsānī city Nishapur also enjoyed a florescence of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the wake of the path blazed by Ishāq Ibn Rāhawayh. The 'Hāfiẓ of Nishapur' and Shaykh al-Islām, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Dhuhli (d. 258/872), devoted so much attention to the *ḥadīth* transmitted by al-Zuhri (of the fourth *ṭabaqa*) that 'Alī b. al-Madīnī called him the "the heir (*wārith*) of al-Zuhri."⁶¹ However, al-Dhuhli managed to not only exile Bukhārī from Nishapur, but also to offend gravely Nishapur's other leading *muḥaddith* of the time, Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj (d. 261/874). This friction seems to have developed over the theological question concerning the nature of the articulation (*lafẓ*) of the Qur'ān.⁶² Al-Dhahabī includes a report in the *Tadhkira* that Muslim left al-Dhuhli's session (*majlis*) when the latter said "Whoever believes that my articulation of the Qur'ān is created, let him not attend this session!"⁶³ Most of al-Dhuhli's students do not appear to have taken this advice, as we find Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Ṣā'id, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and Ibn al-Sharqī among Muslim's pupils.⁶⁴ Indeed, it appears that the extraordinary popularity of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim thoroughly vindicated the authority of its compiler.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ *Tadhkira*, II, 117.

⁶¹ *Tadhkira*, II, 87. Even Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī called al-Dhuhli "the Imām of the people of his time" (*huwa imām ahl zamānih; ibid.*, II, 87). He acquired knowledge from 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī, Abū Dāwūd al-Tayālīsī, and 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī. His students include the compilers of all four *ṣunan* books, Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, Ibn al-Sharqī, and the Shaykh al-Islām of the tenth *ṭabaqa* Ibn Khuzayma.

⁶² For a discussion of the doctrine of *lafẓ*, see Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, 281–85.

⁶³ *Tadhkira*, II, 125–6. Muslim's teachers include two Shuyūkh al-Islām, al-Qa'nabī and Ibn Ḥanbal, although he includes far more *ḥadīth* in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Ibn Abī Shayba, Zuhayr b. Ḥarb, Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā, Qutayba b. Sa'id, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Tamīmī, and Ibn Rāhawayh.

⁶⁴ *Tadhkira*, II, 125.

⁶⁵ The 2000 Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya reprint of Muḥammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī's edition of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī* consists of 3033 *ḥadīth* without repetitions in 55 chapters (there are two chapter 40's in this edition). The organization of Muslim's book has proven to be particularly popular, as al-Dhahabī reports several scholars in the subsequent centuries who followed his format and substituted essentially the same *ḥadīth* with more elevated *isnāds* (see above, II.1, for the meaning of 'elevated *isnāds*') in a process known as *takhrīj*. Already in the eleventh *ṭabaqa*,

⁵³ *Tadhkira*, II, pp. 123–4. The books are *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, *al-Qirā'āt*, and *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*. A minute fragment of his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* concerning meaning of Sūra 4:34 has been published in Muranyi, *Beiträge*, 371–6. See also GAS, I, 475–6.

⁵⁴ Ibn Abī Khaythama, *Akhbār al-Makkiyyin min kitāb al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, ed. Ismā'il Ḥasan Ḥusayn (Riyadh, 1997).

⁵⁵ *Tadhkira*, II, 130. Al-Dhahabī evaluates Ibn Abī Khaythama as Imām and *hujja*.

⁵⁶ *Tadhkira*, II, 119. Dūrī claims to have obtained 30,000 *ḥadīth* from the master Basran scholar Abū Salama al-Tabūdhakī; *ibid.*, I, 289. For more about al-Dūrī, see below, chapter V.4.2.

⁵⁷ The master Ḥanafī scholar al-Taḥāwī (d. 321/933), whom we shall meet in the fourth phase, is quoted by al-Dhahabī as having identified these three men of Rayy as "unique;" *thalāthat bi-l-Rayy lam yakun fī l-arḍi mithluhum; Tadhkira*, II, 117.

⁵⁸ *Tadhkira*, II, 112. Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad b. Idrīs also taught Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī and al-Nasā'ī.

⁵⁹ *Tadhkira*, II, 105. Abū Zur'a also claims to have examined 30,000 *ḥadīth* of Ibn Wahb while in Egypt; *ibid.*, I, 222.

Even further east, two scholars in addition to al-Bukhārī contributed substantially to Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship. Since both scholars are known by their *nisba* al-Dārimī, it is particularly important to distinguish between them. Al-Dhahabī considers Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Dārimī (d. 255/869) to be a Shaykh al-Islām, and his *Musnad* is included among Ibn Ḥajar’s ten most important *ḥadīth* books after the canonical six.⁶⁶ Al-Dārimī traveled from his home in Transoxania to the major *ḥadīth* centers in Khurāsān, Iraq, and Syria, and Yazīd b. Hārūn can be named among his more prominent teachers. He taught scholars such as Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and ‘Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, prior to his return to Samarqand, where he served briefly as a *qāḍī* for the Sāmānids. The second Dārimī, Abū Sa‘īd ‘Uthmān b. Sa‘īd, a native of Herat, has been mentioned above in connection with his systematic organization of Ibn Ma‘īn’s *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism opinions; he also composed a *musnad* that helped lay the foundation for an impressive series of *ḥadīth* scholars in Herat.⁶⁷

Two final scholars of the ninth *ṭabaqa* require brief notices. Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. al-Ash‘ath al-Sijistānī (d. 275/888), compiler of the *Sunan* that is particularly valued for its legal reports (*aḥkām*), stud-

we find books modeled on Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ* by Abū ‘Awāna Ya‘qūb b. Ishāq al-Asfarāyīnī (d. 316/928), Abū ‘Imrān al-Juwaynī (d. 323/935) and Ibn al-Athram (d. 344/955), and in the twelfth *ṭabaqa* we find Abū ‘Alī al-Māsarjīsī (d. 368/978) of Nishapur producing his personal versions of each of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s; *Tadhkira*, III, 3, 27, 55, and 110–1, respectively. Abū ‘Awāna’s book has been published and is one of the ten books included by Ibn Ḥajar in his 16 volume book *Ithāf al-mahara bi-l-fawā’id al-mubtakara min aṭraf al-‘ashara* (Riyadh, 1994). The remaining nine books in *Ithāf al-mahara* are the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Khuzayma, *al-Muntaqā* of Ibn al-Jarūd, Ibn Bulbān al-Fārisī’s (d. 739/1338–9) abridgement of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Hibbān entitled *al-Iḥsān fī taqrīb ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān*, the *Mustadrak ‘alā l-ṣaḥīḥayn* of al-Ḥakīm al-Naysābūrī, the *Muwatta’* of Mālik, Abū l-‘Abbās al-Aṣamm’s (d. 346/957–8) *Musnad* of al-Shāfi‘ī, the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, and *Sharḥ ma‘ānī al-āthār* of al-Ṭahāwī. We have already encountered the books of Mālik (*ṭabaqa* 6) and Ibn Ḥanbal (*ṭabaqa* 8), and shall be introducing all of the remaining scholars, with the exceptions of al-Aṣamm and Ibn Bulbān al-Fārisī, in the remainder of this chapter.

⁶⁶ *Tadhkira*, II, 90. ‘Abdullāh al-Dārimī’s *Musnad* is also called *Sunan* because it is arranged according to legal topics and not *ṣaḥāba*. See the previous footnote for more information about Ibn Ḥajar’s *Ithāf al-mahara*. The 2000 Dār al-Ḥadīth edition of *Sunan al-Dārimī* has a 649-report introduction which is followed by 2854 *ḥadīth* and *āthār* in 23 chapters.

⁶⁷ *Tadhkira*, II, 146. Al-Dhahabī evaluates Abu Sa‘īd as Imām, *ḥujja* and ‘the *Muhaddith* of Herat.’ This Dārimī also composed a theological tract that has been published as *Radd al-imām al-Dārimī ‘alā Bishr al-Marīsī al-anād*.

ied with al-Qa‘nabī and Ibn Ḥanbal and settled in Basra after the ‘Abbāsīd caliph al-Mu‘tamīd’s brother al-Muwaffaq (d. 278/891) extinguished the destructive Zanj revolt of 255–70/869–83.⁶⁸ His students include the famous compilers al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā‘ī, Abū ‘Awāna, and his own son Abū Bakr.⁶⁹ Finally, a freed slave of Ibn Ḥanbal’s known as al-Jūzajānī (d. 259/873), disseminated such strong anti-‘Alī views in Damascus that the Shaykh al-Islām al-Nasā‘ī felt obliged to compose a book in defense of the merits of ‘Alī.⁷⁰

The tenth *ṭabaqa* of *ḥuffāz* is of capital importance because it marks the first time that al-Dhahabī identifies an Andalusī *ḥadīth* scholar as a Shaykh al-Islām. Baqiyy b. Makhlad (d. 276/889) was hardly the first serious Andalusī scholar of *ḥadīth*, but he did set a new standard of excellence with two works, *al-Musnad al-kabīr* and *al-Tafsīr*.⁷¹ Baqiyy heard the *Muwatta’* directly from its prime transmitter in al-Andalus, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī (d. 234/848) and also hauled the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba back to Cordoba from Kufa. His erudition was not appreciated by many of the Andalusī jurists who were less than enthusiastic about *ḥadīth*, and it is unlikely that his teachings would have had much impact had it not been for the protection of the Amīr Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān (ruled 238–73/852–86). The Andalusī historian and *muhaddith* Ibn al-Faraḍī (d. 403/1012–3) credits Baqiyy with having “filled al-Andalus with *ḥadīth*,”⁷² a consequence of which was the prominence of Iberian scholars in the fifth phase of this survey.

Four major scholars of this *ṭabaqa* either originated from or settled in the region of Transoxania. The Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad b. Shu‘ayb al-Nasā‘ī (d. 303/915) studied with Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī and Ibn Rāhawayh in Khurāsān prior to settling in Egypt under the Ṭūlūnids.⁷³ Al-Nasā‘ī developed a reputation for being a particularly

⁶⁸ *Tadhkira*, II, 127; for the Zanj revolt, see Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* (New York: Longman, 1986), 179–81. The 1997 Dār Ibn Hazm edition of *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* contains 5274 *ḥadīth* in 35 chapters. Note that 22% of the *ḥadīth* in this book are found in the single chapter devoted to prayer (*ṣalāt*).

⁶⁹ *Tadhkira*, II, 127.

⁷⁰ *Tadhkira*, II, 195.

⁷¹ *Tadhkira*, II, 151. Al-Dhahabī reports Ibn Ḥazm’s praise of Baqiyy’s *tafsīr* in this entry. Neither book appears to have survived; *GAS*, I, 152–3.

⁷² *Tadhkira*, II, 152. Ibn al-Faraḍī’s entry can be found in the thirteenth *ṭabaqa*; *ibid.*, III, 185.

⁷³ *Tadhkira*, II, 194. His students include al-Dūlābī, al-Ṭabarānī, and Ibn al-Sunnī, the latter of whom is reported to have selected the soundest *ḥadīth* from al-Nasā‘ī’s

harsh *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic, and al-Dhahabī quotes the Meccan scholar al-Zanjānī's statement that his conditions for reliability were even stricter than those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.⁷⁴ A student who traveled in the opposite direction from al-Nasā'ī and settled in Bukhara is the 'Shaykh of Transoxania,' Abū 'Alī Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad Jazara (d. 293/906). Jazara was famous for his exceptional memory, and transmitted the knowledge he obtained from Ibn Ma'īn and Ibn Ḥanbal after the death of al-Bukhārī, this region's most illustrious scholar.

The two remaining Transoxanian scholars of the tenth *ṭabaqa* who returned home after their studies are the Shaykh al-Islām Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī and Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī. Muḥammad b. Naṣr was particularly famous as a jurist, although he studied *ḥadīth* with the great Nishapurian Ibn Rāhawayh, among others.⁷⁵ He entered into the service of the Sāmānids at their capital in Samarqand in 275/888, and his reputation as a master scholar was so great that even the brilliant nonconformist Ibn Ḥazm praised him a century and a half later all the way from al-Andalus.⁷⁶ The final Central Asian scholar of this period, Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī (d. 279/892), was a close disciple of al-Bukhārī, acquired fame as the compiler of a canonical *Sunan* work, a book of *ʿilal*, and a book of the Prophet Muḥammad's ethics.⁷⁷

Kitāb al-sunan al-kabīr and compiled them under the title *Kitāb al-sunan al-muṭṭabā*. This latter title is considered to be among the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books. The 1995 Dār al-Fikr edition of *Sunan al-Nasā'ī al-musammā bi-l-muṭṭabā bi-sharḥ al-ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī wa ḥāshiyat al-Imām al-Sindī* contains 5769 *ḥadīth* in 52 chapters.

⁷⁴ *Tadhkira*, II, 195.

⁷⁵ *Tadhkira*, II, 165–6; *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 99. His succinct book on the differences of the jurists (*ikhtilāf al-fuqahā*) has been published by Ṣubḥī al-Sāmarrā'ī as *Ikhtilāf al-ʿulamā* (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1986). It is striking that al-Marwazī refers to over twenty-five jurists by their names, such as Abū Thawr, Ibn Ḥanbal, and even Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān, and yet consistently employs the term *ashāb al-ra'y* instead of Abū Ḥanīfa, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, or Abū Yūsuf. See below, in chapter eight, for the significance of this observation in the discussion of the problem of the authority of Abū Ḥanīfa in the eyes of the *ḥadīth* scholars.

⁷⁶ *Tadhkira*, II, 165.

⁷⁷ *Tadhkira*, II, 154. Note that al-Dhahabī does not mention the third work, *al-Shanāʾil* in his notice. The Dār Iḥyā l-Turāth al-ʿArabī edition of *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa huwa Sunan al-Tirmidhī* that was initiated under the editorial guidance of Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (volumes I–II), continued by Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī (volume III), and completed without *takhrīj* or commentary by Ibrāhīm ʿAṭwa ʿAwḍ (volumes IV–V) consists of 3956 *ḥadīth* in fifty chapters, plus a final chapter on

Three scholars continued the strong tradition of Iranian *ḥadīth* scholarship throughout the tenth *ṭabaqa*. The most prominent of them, and a particular favorite of al-Dhahabī, is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzayma (d. 311/923) of Nishapur.⁷⁸ A student of al-Bukhārī, al-Dhuhlī, and Muslim, Ibn Khuzayma composed both a *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection that is included among Ibn Ḥajar's 'ten books,' and a significant *ḥadīth*-based theological book called *al-Tawḥīd*.⁷⁹ The reason for this latter theological book was more than mere intellectual curiosity, as Ibn Khuzayma was attacked by many of the Kullābiyya of his day.⁸⁰ It is quite clear from the *Tadhkira* that his uncompromising anti-*kalām* polemic resonated strongly with al-Dhahabī's *salafi* sensitivities.

Two other scholars of Iranian cities had a more modest impact on Sunnī *ḥadīth* tradition than Ibn Khuzayma. Abū Bishr al-Dulābī (d. 310/923) was an important *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic in Rayy who helped educate the most famous scholars of the eleventh *ṭabaqa*, like Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn ʿAdī, Ibn Ḥibbān, and al-Ṭabarānī.⁸¹ His prosopographical book *al-Asmāʾ wa l-kunā* preserves a great many opinions of the master critic of some interest for this book, Ibn Ma'īn. Abū ʿAbdullāh Ibn Māja (d. 273/886) hailed from the city of Qazvin, and his *Sunan* ultimately achieved the elevated status of the sixth of the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books.⁸² Ibn Māja also composed a

ḥadīth-transmitter criticism and methodology. Two significant unique features of al-Tirmidhī's book are: 1) the regular inclusion of the legal opinions of Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, Ibn al-Mubārak, al-Shāfiʿī, Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Rāhawayh, the "People of Kufa" (Abū Ḥanīfa and his disciples), and many *ṣaḥāba*; 2) the evaluation of the authenticity of each *ḥadīth* in the collection, often with useful notes about names of transmitters and variant versions of the text and *isnād*. Many of these notes come from his teacher al-Bukhārī.

⁷⁸ *Tadhkira*, II, 207; *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, 297.

⁷⁹ The published edition of Ibn Khuzayma's *Ṣaḥīḥ* is based on a unique incomplete manuscript and consists of 3079 *ḥadīth* that cover the topics of prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage; *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Khuzayma*, ed. M. M. al-Aʿzamī (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, n.d.).

⁸⁰ The Kullābiyya seem to be the precursors to the Ashʿarīs; see *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, II, 225–28 for a description of some of their theological beliefs.

⁸¹ *Tadhkira*, II, 230.

⁸² *Tadhkira*, II, 155. As we noted in the introduction, Goldziher astutely identified the Zāhirī Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī of the fifteenth *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* (IV, 27–30) as the first scholar to include Ibn Māja along with the other five books; *Muslim Studies*, II, 240 (this view is seconded by Ṣiddīqī in *Ḥadīth Literature*, 73). We also saw, in the previous chapter, that Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ did not recognize Ibn Māja's *Sunan* as the same rank of the other five books. The 1983 Riyadh edition of *Sunan Ibn Māja* edited by M. M. al-Aʿzamī contains 4397 *ḥadīth*.

tafsīr and a history, both of which appear to have been lost since al-Dhahabī's day.⁸³

Baghdad retained its eminence during the tenth *ṭabaqa* due to the labors of several scholars. Ibn Ḥanbal's son 'Abdullāh (d. 290/903) distinguished himself as the sole transmitter of the 30,000-*ḥadīth* *Musnad*, a supposed 120,000-*ḥadīth* Qur'ānic exegesis, and thousands of *ḥadīth* reports from his illustrious father.⁸⁴ Another son of a famous *ḥadīth* scholar of this time was Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 316/929), who composed his own *Musnad* and *Sunan* books.⁸⁵ Ibn Abī Dāwūd appears to have developed a quarrel with his father, as well as with one of the most prominent scholars of Baghdad, Ibn Šā'id (d. 318/930).⁸⁶ Al-Dhahabī reports that the Shaykh of Nishapur, Abū 'Alī al-Naysābūrī, declared that Ibn Šā'id possessed a superior comprehension of *ḥadīth* to his rival Ibn Abī Dāwūd, even if the latter had memorized a larger amount of the material. The work of these four scholars not only systematized the erudition of the luminaries of the preceding two *ṭabaqāt*, but can be seen as the catalysts for the climactic period of Baghdādī *ḥadīth* scholarship in the fourth phase that is approaching rapidly.

Two final scholars deserve mention for their majestic literary contributions to Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature and Islamic civilization in general.⁸⁷ Abū Ya'lā Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Mawṣilī (d. 307/919–20) helped establish the tradition of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the province of northern Iraq (al-Jazīra), and he composed a large *mu'jam* of his teachers, in addition to his 7555-*ḥadīth* *Musnad*.⁸⁸ His student Ibn Ḥibbān

praised him for his reliability and precision, and two of his other students, Abū 'Alī al-Naysābūrī and Abū Bakr al-Ismā'īlī contributed greatly to the fourth-century florescence of *ḥadīth* scholarship in Iran. The final scholar of the tenth *ṭabaqa* of unique erudition is the historian, Qur'ānic exegete, and jurist Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923).⁸⁹ Al-Dhahabī commented that "had I wished, I could have written twenty pages about the life of this *imām*" and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, no stranger to literary composition, claimed that al-Ṭabarī "gathered diverse types of knowledge that none of his age had ever synthesized."⁹⁰ Despite the fact that some Ḥanbalīs made life very unpleasant for al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Khuzayma reports that they wronged him and that he knew of no one more knowledgeable than him.⁹¹ While al-Ṭabarī did not live to complete his ambitious *ḥadīth* book *Taḥdhīb al-āthār*,⁹² his *tafsīr*, *Jāmi' al-bayān fī tafsīr āy al-Qur'ān*, contains a vast array of *ḥadīth* and *āthār*, and, according to al-Suyūṭī, has never been surpassed in its genre.⁹³

with an elevated *isnād* from each of the student's teachers was arranged alphabetically. These books became increasingly popular in the later phases of *ḥadīth* transmission.

⁸⁹ See Franz Rosenthal's *The History of al-Ṭabarī, I: General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 5–133 and Claude Gilliot, *Exégèse, Langue, et Théologie en Islam: L'Exégèse Coranique de Tabari* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1990), 19–68 for detailed expositions of al-Ṭabarī's life and works.

⁹⁰ *Tadhkira*, II, 201–2. Al-Dhahabī's quote: *law ashā'u la-katabtu 'ishrīna waraqatan min sirati ḥādhā l-imām*; al-Khaṭīb's statement: *jama'a min al-'ulūm mā lam yushārikhu fīhi ahad min ahl 'asrīh*.

⁹¹ *Tadhkira*, II, 202.

⁹² This book is described by Rosenthal, who mentions that the preserved fragments of the *musnads* of 'Alī and Ibn 'Abbās have been published in three volumes by Maḥmūd Shākir (1982) and that the *musnad* of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb remains to be published; Rosenthal, *General Introduction*, 128–30.

⁹³ Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, II (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1996), 1237. He quotes al-Nawawī as saying *kitāb Ibn Jarīr fī l-tafsīr lam yusannif ahadun miḥlahu*. Note that Herbert Berg's recent study of this *tafsīr*, or, to be more precise, his study of 997 reports transmitted on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, led him to the sweeping conclusions that "it may well be that the mythic status of Ibn 'Abbās actually preceded any attribution of exegetical material to him" and that "as to when [Ibn 'Abbās'] material was actually produced and when the *isnads* were attached, a determination is impossible from the data of my study," Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, 214–15. Since many of Ibn 'Abbās's principle students died around 100/718 and al-Ṭabarī began dictating "a substantial portion" of his *tafsīr* in 270/883 in Baghdad (Rosenthal, *General Introduction*, 106), there does not seem to be more than a 150-year window during which the material could have possibly come into circulation. A more promising piece of research is the *isnād* analysis found in Heribert Horst: "Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar at-Ṭabarī," *ZDMG* 103 (1953), 290–307. Horst's investigation uncovers several *isnāds* that are cited so frequently that they most likely indicate early books which al-Ṭabarī synthesized in his *tafsīr*,

⁸³ *GAS*, I, 147–8.

⁸⁴ *Tadhkira*, II, 173. Melchert cites al-Dhahabī's serious doubts in the *Siyar* that a 120,000-*ḥadīth* *tafsīr* existed; *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 153.

⁸⁵ *Tadhkira*, II, 235. Al-Dhahabī praises Ibn Abī Dāwūd as the "exemplar (*qudwa*) of the *muhaddithūn*," and his students include al-Dāraquṭnī, Ibn Shāhīn, and Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī.

⁸⁶ *Tadhkira*, II, 240. One of Ibn Šā'id's most prominent students was al-Dāraquṭnī.

⁸⁷ Four other important compilers of the tenth *ṭabaqa* of the *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* whose names can be mentioned only in passing are: 1) Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Amr al-Bazzār (d. 292/905 in Ramla), whose *Musnad* has been published; 2) Qādī Ibrāhīm b. Ma'qil al-Nasafī (d. 295/908), a major transmitter of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, as well as a compiler of his own *musnad* and *tafsīr*; 3) al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān (d. 303/915 near Nasā), the 'Shaykh of Khurāsān' who transmitted the works of Ibn Abī Shayba, Ibn Rāhawayh and Abū Thawr, and composed a large *musnad* and collection of 'forty *ḥadīth*' of his own; and 4) Abū Bakr al-Rūyānī (d. 307/919), whose short *musnad* has been published; *Tadhkira*, II, 166–7, 186, 197–8, and 226, respectively.

⁸⁸ *Tadhkira*, II, 199. The *mu'jam* book was a compilation in which a single *ḥadīth*

A brief review of the literary accomplishment of the third phase of *ḥadīth* scholars is in order prior to the discussion of the even more extraordinary fourth period. In addition to the composition of the six most revered Sunnī *ḥadīth* books of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāʾī, and Ibn Māja, there appeared the *Sunan* of al-Dārimī, the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal/ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad, the *Musnad* of Abū Yaʿlā al-Mawṣilī, the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Khuzayma, the *Muṣannaḥ* of Ibn Abī Shayba, and the *tafsīr* of al-Ṭabarī. The compilation of the first historical-critical book of the *ṭabaqāt* genre by Ibn Saʿd took place during this time, along with the most authoritative book of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* of al-Bukhārī, multiple recensions of Ibn Maʿīn's critical opinions, and al-Dūlābī's book of names and *kunyas*. Finally, two works of general *ḥadīth* defects (*ʿilal*) also arrived on the scene, namely those of Ibn Ḥanbal/Abdullāh b. Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī. This list only consists of significant works that have survived to this day in the Sunnī tradition, and the collective mass of these books provided a secure foundation for the following two phases of intense compilation and criticism.

III.5 Phase 4: The triumph of Baghdad and Iran (c. 300–400/912–1009)

The achievements in the disciplines of *ḥadīth*, in general, and Sunnī *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, in particular, are so remarkable in the fourth and fifth phases of this narrative, that one could question Hodgson's description of this period as the "Shīʿī century."⁹⁴ Indeed, the pro-Shīʿī Daylamite Buyids and their courtier princes appear to have done little to hinder the remarkable scholarly activity in the arts of Sunnī *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism, which flourished throughout this period in Baghdad and the great cities of Iran. Some

the most prominent example is the material of Qatāda that is transmitted by Saʿīd b. Abī ʿArūba, to Yazīd b. Zurayʿ, to Muʿadh b. Bishr that is cited 3060 times. Note that the first three scholars in this *isnād* are all Basrans mentioned by al-Dhahabī in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*. The second most frequently cited *isnād* in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*, Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Aʿlā → Ibn Wahb → ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd, also contains two scholars—Yūnus and Ibn Wahb—who are honored in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*.

⁹⁴ Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, II, 36. This phrase was initially coined by V. Minorsky, although Hodgson does not provide a reference for it.

light will be shed as well on the situation in al-Andalus and Egypt during this time, as the former experienced a florescence and the latter a period of severe repression during the following phase of *ḥadīth* literature.

Eight late third/early fourth (ninth/tenth) century scholars who flourished in Baghdad demand our immediate attention.⁹⁵ The Shāfiʿī master jurist, Shaykh al-Islām, and "renewer (*mujaddid*) of religion" Abū l-ʿAbbās Ibn Surayj (d. 306/918) acquired an elevated proficiency in *ḥadīth* disciplines from ʿAbbās al-Dūrī and Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī.⁹⁶ Another important jurist who also excelled at *ḥadīth* was the founder of the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, known as al-Khallāl (d. 311/923).⁹⁷ His *Kitāb al-sunna* has survived and al-Dhahabī credits him with the systematic organization the religious knowledge of Ibn Ḥanbal. A final major jurist of the first half of the fourth/tenth century who invested much time in *ḥadīth* studies was the 'Shaykh of Baghdad' al-Qāḍī al-Ḥusayn b. Ismāʿīl al-Maḥāmīlī (d. 330/942).⁹⁸ He served in the capacity of judge for some sixty years in Kufa and al-Dhahabī counts al-Dāraquṭnī among his pupils.

Baghdad nurtured another four master *ḥadīth* scholars during the twelfth *ṭabaqa*. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusyan al-Ājurī (d. 360/971) composed a theological book of *ḥadīth* titled *Kitāb al-sharīʿa fī l-sunna* and his knowledge disseminated throughout the Islamic world due to his prolonged stay in Mecca at the end of his life.⁹⁹ The Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Mihrān (d. 375/985–6) studied with his fellow tenth *ṭabaqa* Baghdadī Ibn Ṣāʿid, composed a large *musnad*, and lived

⁹⁵ A ninth scholar, whom I have not included, is the *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Azdi of Mosul (d. 374/984–5) who settled in Baghdad. Despite his studies with Abū Yaʿlā l-Mawṣilī and al-Ṭabarī, certain later scholars, such as al-Barqānī, considered him to be weak. Al-Dhahabī mentions his large book of unreliable transmitters (*duʿafāʾ*), and complains that he criticized many scholars without any justification; *Tadhkira*, III, 117.

⁹⁶ *Tadhkira*, III, 23. Melchert credits Ibn Surayj with the accomplishment of founding the classical Shāfiʿī *madhhab* and notes that none of his books has survived; *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 88–102. Al-Dhahabī counts the great Palestinian *ḥadīth* scholar al-Ṭabarānī among his students.

⁹⁷ *Tadhkira*, III, 6; *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 143–50.

⁹⁸ *Tadhkira*, III, 31. The critic al-Fallās was among his teachers.

⁹⁹ *Tadhkira*, III, 99. One of his students is Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣbahānī of the thirteenth *ṭabaqa*. Abū Bakr al-Ājurī's book has been published in six volumes as *Kitāb al-sharīʿa* (Riyadh: Dār al-Waṭan, 1997).

for thirty years in the area of Bukhara and Samarqand.¹⁰⁰ A Baghdādī collector of *ḥadīth* who chose to stay in his hometown is Abū Ḥafṣ Ibn Shāhīn (d. 385/995), and al-Dhahabī adorns him with the honorific ‘Shaykh of Iraq.’ He is reported to have composed an enormous *tafsīr*, a biographical dictionary, and a staggering collection of *ḥadīth* from the tenth *ṭabaqa* scholar Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghawī (d. 317/929).¹⁰¹ Ibn Shāhīn represents an interesting case of a *ḥadīth* scholar who unabashedly refused to study jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and would brazenly reply to the question “what is your *madhhab*?” with the answer “that of Muḥammad.”¹⁰²

The most exceptional scholar of this phase, in the eyes of al-Dhahabī, is the Shaykh al-Islām and ‘Hāfiẓ of the age’ Abū l-Ḥasan ‘Alī b. ‘Umar al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385/995).¹⁰³ His education consisted of the seven Qur’ānic readings from the man who codified them, Ibn al-Mujāhid (d. 326/936), and *ḥadīth* from numerous scholars, such as Ibn Abī Dāwūd and Ibn Šā’id. His modest book entitled *Sunan* has enjoyed a high degree of prestige among the authoritative Sunnī works, and his opinions concerning *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and general *ḥadīth* criticism (*‘ilal*) have been valued by all Sunnī scholars. Finally, his roster of students is the envy of any teacher, as it includes many of the great names we shall be encountering in the fifth phase: al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, ‘Abd al-Ghanī b. Sa’id al-Miṣrī, Abū Bakr al-Barqānī, Abū Dharr al-Harawī, and Abū Nu’aym al-Iṣbahānī.

The triumph of the cities of Iran during the fourth phase should be seen as the culmination of a process that had its roots back in the eighth *ṭabaqa* with Ibn Rāhawayh and the ninth one with al-Dhuhli, Muslim, Abū Ḥātim, Abū Zur’a, and Ibn Wāra. The master critic (*nāqid*) and Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 327/939) synthesized the teachings of the three master critics of Rayy into his book entitled *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta’dīl*.¹⁰⁴ Despite the fact that he did not

¹⁰⁰ *Tadhkira*, III, 118. His full name is Abū Muslim ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad and Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī is one of his pupils.

¹⁰¹ Abū l-Qāsim ‘Abdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Baghawī studied with Ibn al-Madīnī and Ibn Ḥanbal, among others, and taught Ibn Šā’id and al-Dāraquṭnī; *Tadhkira*, II, 217. He should not be confused with the famous fifteenth *ṭabaqa* scholar Abū Muḥammad al-Baghawī al-Shāfi‘ī, whom we shall encounter in the sixth phase.

¹⁰² *Tadhkira*, III, 129. Al-Dhahabī lists al-Barqānī among Ibn Shāhīn’s pupils.

¹⁰³ *Tadhkira*, III, 132–4.

¹⁰⁴ *Tadhkira*, III, 34. For a somewhat superficial study of the introduction of this

travel to Khurāsān, Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥākim of Nishapur came to him, as did a seminal scholar of Isfahan, Abū l-Shaykh b. Ḥayyān.

The city of Jurjān in the province of Ṭabaristān enjoyed a brief international florescence due to the erudition of two of her native twelfth *ṭabaqa* sons.¹⁰⁵ Abū Aḥmad ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Adī (d. 365/976) compiled one of the most prestigious books of tarnished transmitters, titled *al-Kāmil fī du‘afā’ al-rijāl*, that ultimately served as the platform for al-Dhahabī’s own critical masterpiece, *Mizān al-‘itidāl*. Al-Dāraquṭnī is reported to have answered a request that he compile a dictionary of unreliable *ḥadīth* transmitters with the curt reply “Do you not have the *Kāmil* of Ibn ‘Adī?” When they replied in the affirmative, he said “It is sufficient; there is nothing to add to it.”¹⁰⁶ Ibn ‘Adī’s contemporary in Jurjān who led his funeral prayers was the Shaykh al-Islām Abū Bakr al-Ismā‘īlī (d. 371/981–2).¹⁰⁷ Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī reports that al-Ismā‘īlī was the “Shaykh of the *muhaddithūn* and the *fuqahā’*,” and al-Dhahabī mentions that he was a leader of the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* in this region.

The Khurāsānī city of Nishapur was the only serious rival to Baghdad during the fourth phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship. Abū ‘Awāna Ya‘qūb b. Ishāq (d. 316/928) studied in his home city with al-Dhuhli prior to settling in Isfārayn, where he introduced the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*.¹⁰⁸ Another student of al-Dhuhli, Abū ‘Amr al-Ḥīrī (d. 317/929), acquired

book, see Erik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). I address Dickinson’s rather sweeping arguments concerning Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s misrepresentation of the first two generations of *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics in the following chapter.

¹⁰⁵ Two ninth *ṭabaqa* master *ḥadīth* scholars who lived in Jurjān a century earlier and composed *musnads* are ‘Ammār b. Rajā’ al-Astarābādī (d. 267/880) and Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Wazdūlī (d. 259/873); *Tadhkira*, II, 108–9. Al-Dhahabī mentions that some of al-Wazdūlī’s *ḥadīth* are found in Abū Bakr al-Ismā‘īlī’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*; *Siyar*, XII, 507–8.

¹⁰⁶ *Tadhkira*, III, 102. This story is either apocryphal, or al-Dāraquṭnī evidently changed his mind, as he composed a 632-entry book of weak transmitters titled *Kitāb al-du‘afā’ wa l-matrūkīn* (Beirut, 1984). Ibn ‘Adī studied with al-Nasā’ī and Abū Ya‘lā l-Mawṣilī, and al-Dhahabī reports that he also composed a book based on the chapters of the classical Shāfi‘ī *fiqh* book *al-Mukhtaṣar* of Abū Ibrāhīm Ismā‘īl b. Yahyā al-Muzanī (d. 264/878). Note that al-Dhahabī does not include al-Muzanī, the Egyptian disciple of al-Shāfi‘ī, in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*. Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī mentions him in *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā’*, 97; see also *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 80–2.

¹⁰⁷ *Tadhkira*, III, 106. A portion of al-Ismā‘īlī’s large three volume *muṣjam* has been published recently (Mecca, c. 1990–5) and his teachers include al-Nasā’ī and Ibn Khuzayma.

¹⁰⁸ *Tadhkira*, III, 3. His students include Ibn ‘Adī, Abū Bakr al-Ismā‘īlī, and Abū

ḥadīth from Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī and the *Musnad* of Abū Sa'īd al-Dārimī.¹⁰⁹ A third major *ḥadīth* scholar of Nishapur in the first decades of the fourth/tenth century is the critic (*al-nāqid*) Ibn al-Jārūd (d. 307/919–20), a close companion of Ibn Khuzayma, who composed a short book of legal *ḥadīth* called *al-Muntaqā fī l-aḥkām*.¹¹⁰ The final major Nishapurian scholar of the eleventh *ṭabaqa* is Ibn al-Sharqī (d. 325/937), the disciple and authoritative (*ḥujja*) compiler of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹¹¹ These four master scholars not only compiled valuable Sunnī *ḥadīth* books, but also transmitted their knowledge to another generation of exceptional scholars, two of whom maintained this high standard in Nishapur.¹¹²

Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Naysābūrī (d. 349/960) has already received some attention due to his rare sobriquet '*Muḥaddith* al-Islām.' His extensive travels netted him a large library of *ḥadīth*, and some of his more prominent teachers include al-Nasā'ī, Abū Ya'lā, and, closer to home, Ibn al-Sharqī.¹¹³ The other twelfth *ṭabaqa* master *ḥadīth* scholar of significance is Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥākim (d. 378/988), the '*Muḥaddith* of Khurāsān,' who was an expert in the standards used by al-Bukhārī and Muslim for the inclusion of material in their respective *Ṣaḥīḥ* books.¹¹⁴ A student of Ibn

'Alī al-Naysābūrī, and as was mentioned above, his *mustakhraj* based on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim is among the ten books of Ibn Hajar's *Ithāf al-mahara*.

¹⁰⁹ *Tadhkira*, III, 15. Al-Dhahabī recognizes him as the 'Shaykh of Nishapur,' and his students also include Abū Bakr al-Isma'īlī and Abū 'Alī al-Naysābūrī.

¹¹⁰ *Tadhkira*, III, 12. This book was granted the same status as the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim by Ibn Hazm, and Ibn Hajar included it among the 'ten books' of *Ithāf al-mahara*. The published edition includes 1114 *ḥadīth*, many of which come from al-Dhuhli, and is titled *al-Muntaqā min al-sunan al-musnada 'an rasūl Allāh* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1987). Ibn al-Jārūd's name is 'Abdullāh b. 'Alī b. Jārūd.

¹¹¹ *Tadhkira*, III, 29. Al-Dhahabī reports that Ibn al-Sharqī also studied with Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, and that Ibn 'Adī checked all of the contents of *al-Kāmil* with him for accuracy. His name is Abū Ḥamid Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan.

¹¹² Another important Nishapurian student of Ibn Khuzayma is the *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Amr al-Uqaylī (d. 322/934) who settled in the Hijāz; *Tadhkira*, III, 36–7. His large book consisting solely of unreliable transmitters, *Kitāb al-du'afā'*, was one of the first systematic books of its kind and has published in four volumes in Riyadh by Dār al-Ṣumay'ī (2000).

¹¹³ *Tadhkira*, III, 79. His students include the exceptional *ḥadīth* scholar al-Ḥākim Abū 'Abdullāh al-Naysābūrī, as well as the prominent Isfahānī Abū 'Abdullāh Ibn Manda and the Ṣūfī Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī.

¹¹⁴ *Tadhkira*, III, 123. He is reported to have made his own personal editions (*kharaja alā*) of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ*s, the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī, and the *Mukhtaṣar* of al-Muzanī. Al-Dhahabī includes a fascinating anecdote relating Abū Aḥmad's surprise in Rayy at a reading of *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl* to its compiler Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, and said

Khuzayma, and a skilled jurist of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, Abū Aḥmad served as *qāḍī* of Shāsh (now Tashkent) from 333–37/944–48 and Ṭūs from 337–45/948–56. The remainder of his life was spent in Nishapur, where he taught *ḥadīth* and general *ḥadīth* criticism (*īlal*) to, among others, the previously mentioned al-Ḥākim Abū 'Abdullāh al-Naysābūrī.

Two additional Khurāsānī master scholars of the fourth phase must be included in this historical survey. Abū Naḍr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī (d. 344/955–6), an eleventh *ṭabaqa* Shaykh al-Islām, also acquired the honorific of 'Shaykh of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*' due to his mastery of jurisprudence.¹¹⁵ Al-Dhahabī mentions that al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī visited Abū Naḍr twice in Ṭūs, where he observed that he spent a third of the night compiling books, another third reading Qur'ān, and a third asleep. The other master *ḥadīth* scholar of considerable interest for this book is the 'renaissance *muḥaddith*' Abū Ḥatīm Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965).¹¹⁶ His student al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī reports that he passed through Nishapur several times, served as a *qāḍī* briefly in Nasā, built a *khānaqah* in which he read all of his books, and returned home to Sijistān in 340/951.¹¹⁷ Ibn Ḥibbān is a particularly interesting case, as he is one of the few *ḥadīth* scholars to have achieved a proficiency in non-religious sciences, and his *khānaqah* is one of the few references to such a structure in the entire *Tadhkira*.

The final Iranian city that achieved a worldwide level of prominence for *ḥadīth* scholarship during the fourth phase is Isfahan. In fact, just as the tradition in Nishapur was beginning to lose steam in the twelfth *ṭabaqa*, Isfahan received an extraordinary foundation

to one of the readers: "This is funny—I see you reading the *Tārīkh* of al-Bukhārī to your Shaykh and attributing it to Abū Zur'a and Abū Ḥatīm!" The student replied: "When al-Bukhārī's *Tārīkh* was brought to Abū Ḥatīm and Abū Zur'a, they said: 'This knowledge is indispensable—it does us no good to mention it on anyone else's authority'; *ibid.*, III, 124.

¹¹⁵ *Tadhkira*, III, 73. His teachers include Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī and Isma'īl al-Qāḍī, as well as Abū Sa'īd al-Dārimī of Herat.

¹¹⁶ *Tadhkira*, III, 89. Ibn Ḥibbān studied with al-Nasā'ī, Abū Ya'lā, and Ibn Khuzayma; he also dabbled in astronomy and medicine during his time as *qāḍī* in the culturally rich Sāmānī capital of Samarqand.

¹¹⁷ *Tadhkira*, III, 90. We have already mentioned that al-Fārisī's abridgement of Ibn Ḥibbān's *Ṣaḥīḥ* is included among Ibn Hajar's ten books in *Ithāf al-mahara*, and that al-Dhahabī mentions his *Kitāb al-thiqāt* among the four most important sources for this type of knowledge in *al-Mūqiza*.

in the form of two scholars. Abū l-Qāsim Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī (d. 360/971), the authority (*hujja*) and 'Musnid of the temporal world (*dunyā*)' spent the final seven decades of his long life in his adopted city of Isfahan.¹¹⁸ The largest of his three *ḥadīth* encyclopedias, *al-Muḥjam al-kabīr*, is really a *musnad* work (minus the *musnad* of Abū Hurayra) that contains at least 30,000 *ḥadīth*.¹¹⁹ Al-Ṭabarānī also achieved notoriety in the *ḥadīth* competitions (*mudhākara*) he held in 349/960 with the master Baghdādī scholar Ibn al-Jī'ābī (d. 355/966).¹²⁰ The other important *ḥadīth* scholar of Isfahan during this time was Abū Bakr b. Abī 'Āṣim Abū l-Shaykh (d. 369/979–80). Al-Dhahabī recognizes Abū l-Shaykh as the 'Musnid of his time' and includes an anecdote on the authority of "some 'ulamā'" that they always found al-Ṭabarānī laughing or joking when they visited him, whereas Abū l-Shaykh was always praying.¹²¹

It is also necessary to pay a brief visit to Cordoba in order to introduce a few of the scholars who bridge the gap between the tenth *ṭabaqa* Shaykh al-Islām Baqīyy b. Makhlad and the fourteenth *ṭabaqa* Shuyūkh al-Islām al-Dānī and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. One early scholar of the eleventh *ṭabaqa* is the 'Muḥaddith of al-Andalus' Abū 'Abdullāh Ibn Ḥayyūn (d. 305/917). Despite his predilection for *tashayyū'*, Ibn Ḥayyūn is evaluated as an Imām by al-Dhahabī, and it is quite likely that he brought a copy of Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* back to al-Andalus with him after his time in Baghdad with Ibn Ḥanbal's son 'Abdullāh.¹²² A second 'Shaykh al-Andalus' of the eleventh *ṭabaqa* is Abū 'Umar Ibn al-Jabbāb al-Qurṭubī (d. 322/934). Ibn al-Jabbāb studied with Baqīyy b. Makhlad, excelled at Mālikī jurisprudence, and is reported to have composed a book on the stories of the prophets.¹²³ The final major Andalusī scholar of this phase who must be mentioned is al-Qāsim b. Aṣbagh al-Qurṭubī (d. 340/951–2), another student of Baqīyy b. Makhlad. Qāsim traveled to Baghdād

¹¹⁸ *Tadhkira*, III, 85. His insatiable quest for *ḥadīth* led him from his hometown 'Akkā in Palestine to nearly one thousand teachers, including the Shaykh al-Islām al-Nasā'ī in Egypt, throughout the lands of Islam.

¹¹⁹ His intermediary *muḥjam*, *al-Muḥjam al-awsaṭ*, contains over 10,000 *ḥadīth*.

¹²⁰ Ibn al-Jī'ābī was a student of Ibn Ḥibbān who taught al-Dāraquṭnī, Ibn Shāhin, and Abū 'Alī al-Naysābūrī prior to his conversion to speculative theology or Imāmī Shī'ism near the end of his life; *Tadhkira*, III, 92–4.

¹²¹ *Tadhkira*, III, 105.

¹²² *Tadhkira*, III, 4.

¹²³ *Tadhkira*, III, 25. His name is Abū 'Umar Aḥmad b. Khālid b. Yazīd.

in order to acquire knowledge from Ismā'īl al-Qāḍī and the history of Ibn Abī Khaythama; Ibn Ḥazm considered his *ḥadīth* book *al-Muntaqā* to be of the same status as *al-Muntaqā* of Ibn al-Jārūd al-Naysābūrī and the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.¹²⁴

A final scholar of the fourth phase who should not be overlooked is Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭahāwī (d. 321/933). Al-Dhahabī reports that al-Ṭahāwī adopted the Ḥanafī *madhhab* after his uncle, the famous Shāfi'ī jurist al-Muzanī, insulted him by saying "By God! Nothing good will come of you!"¹²⁵ Al-Ṭahāwī's extraordinary knowledge of *ḥadīth* in addition to Ḥanafī jurisprudence is evident from his significant book *Kitāb ma'ānī al-āthār*,¹²⁶ and his concise creed (*aqida*) has also achieved a prominent place among most Sunnī scholars to this day.

The fourth phase of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship demonstrates a remarkable continuity in both scope and quality with the preceding one. Four of the ten books synthesized by Ibn Ḥajar in his *Ithāf al-mahara* were composed during this period and the Baghdādī scholars al-Khallāl, al-Ājurī, and al-Dāraquṭnī all left impressive compilations of *ḥadīth* that have survived to this day. Al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Muḥjam al-kabīr* remains one of the largest *ḥadīth* books ever compiled, and both Abū Bakr al-Isma'īlī's books and al-Qāsim b. Aṣbagh's *al-Muntaqā* exerted a deep influence in their respective regions of the Islamic Community. Furthermore, the fourth phase witnessed a remarkable proliferation of the standard Sunnī *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism books by Ibn Abī Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Adī, Ibn Ḥibbān, al-'Uqaylī and Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Azdī. Finally, the careful attention paid to the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim by scholars such as Ibn al-Sharqī, Abū

¹²⁴ *Tadhkira*, III, 49 and 227. His Andalusī students were the teachers of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. Al-Dhahabī reports that Ibn Asbagh compiled a *ḥadīth* book arranged according to the topics of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*; *ibid.*, III, 49.

¹²⁵ *Tadhkira*, III, 21. *wa-llāhi, lā jā'a minka shay'un!*

¹²⁶ This book is included among the ten books in Ibn Ḥajar's *Ithāf al-mahara*. The large four-volume 1996 Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya edition *Sharḥ ma'ānī l-āthār* lacks a numerical counter, although it is safe to say that the book contains several thousand *ḥadīth* in its twenty-nine chapters. This book is critically important for *ḥadīth* studies because al-Ṭahāwī methodically collects clusters of *ḥadīth* related to a single legal topic and explains which version of the report is the most authoritative on the basis of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and his profound knowledge of the differing opinions of most of the major early Muslim jurists. Al-Ṭahāwī's other famous *ḥadīth* book, *Sharḥ mushkil al-āthār*, has been edited with extensive notes by Shu'ayb al-Arnā'ūt (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risāla, 1994). Note that Ṣiddīqī does not mention al-Ṭahāwī in *Ḥadīth Literature*.

Bakr al-Ismā'īlī, and Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥākim demonstrates that these books achieved an unparalleled degree of prestige within less than a century of their compilation. Given the large number of original *ḥadīth* books that Muslim scholars compiled from the second to fourth phases of this survey, it is perhaps not surprising that far more attention was devoted to the composition of biographical dictionaries and books concerning the *ḥadīth* disciplines during the next phase of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship.

III.6 Phase 5: The age of specialization (c. 400–480/1009–1087)

The presence of six of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's seven "scholars who compiled useful compositions" in the fields of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the fifth phase of this historical survey is eloquent testimony to its significance.¹²⁷ Three of the four Shuyūkh al-Islām of this phase thrived in al-Andalus, and the fact that one of them never traveled east for educational purposes indicates the self-sufficient excellence of *ḥadīth* scholarship that had developed from the time of Baqīyy b. Makhḥad. The fourth Shaykh al-Islām of this period lived in Herat, which was also the birthplace of the most elevated transmitter of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī. Two cities of Iran—Isfahan and Nishapur—continued to produce illustrious scholars, as did Baghdad. The arrival of the Ismā'īlī Fāṭimids challenged the *ḥadīth* scholarship of Egypt and Mecca, which had achieved a high level of quality under the Ikshīdids and the more or less independent Hījāz. In many ways, the fifth phase of *ḥadīth* criticism and transmission completes the period of original books of *ḥadīth* literature that began back in the middle of the second/eighth century of Islamic civilization.

Four major Andalusī scholars contributed to the venture of *ḥadīth* transmission in a manner that deeply effected both the western and central lands of the Muslim world. The Ṣūfī Shaykh al-Islām 'Aṭīyya b. Sa'īd (d. 408/1017–8) traveled all the way to Transoxania in order to hear the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī from a student of the original compiler of the book, al-Firabrī.¹²⁸ 'Aṭīyya transmitted the *Ṣaḥīḥ* in his adopted home of Mecca, where he also shared his expertise in

the variant readings of the Qur'ān (*qirā'āt*) and mysticism.¹²⁹ A second Andalusī Shaykh al-Islām, Abū 'Amr 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dānī (d. 444/1052), was also a world class expert of *qirā'āt* and is reported to have composed 120 books.¹³⁰ The third and final Shaykh al-Islām of this period, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1071), is distinguished as the sole Andalusī among Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's list of 'seven compilers of useful books' and left an extraordinary textual legacy.¹³¹ Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's biographical dictionary of the *ṣaḥāba*, *Kitāb al-istī'āb*, was considered the premier book of its type by Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ,¹³² and his monograph *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa faḍliḥ* was one of the first systematic articulations of the *ḥadīth* disciplines. Two exhaustive commentaries of *al-Muwatta'*, the *Tamhīd* and *al-Istidhkār*, unequivocally secured Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's spot among the most august Sunnī scholars.¹³³ These accomplishments are all the more impressive considering that Ibn 'Abd al-Barr never left al-Andalus, and indicate the high level of indigenous *ḥadīth* erudition of his numerous teachers, many of whom had studied with Ibn al-Jabbāb and al-Qāsim b. Aṣṣagh.

The final Andalusī scholar who requires attention is the iconoclastic genius 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064). Despite his early life of privilege as the son of a *wazīr*, Ibn Ḥazm developed an unquenchable thirst for religious knowledge in his early twenties. His unique articulation of the Ṣāḥirī *madhhab* earned him the title *mujtahid* from al-Dhahabī, and his multi-volume legal book *al-Muḥallā bi-l-āthār* was one of the few texts in its day to be grounded almost exclusively upon the Qur'ān and the authoritative *ḥadīth* books instead of the opinions of earlier master jurists.¹³⁴ Ibn Ḥazm's efforts

¹²⁹ 'Aṭīyya was a disciple of the famous mystic Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī in both Nishapur and Baghdad.

¹³⁰ *Tadhkira*, III, 211.

¹³¹ *Tadhkira*, III, 217. Al-Dhahabī quotes Ibn Ḥazm's praise of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's large commentary on the *Muwatta'*, *al-Tamhīd*, as well as its large abridgement, *al-Istidhkār*.

¹³² *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 485.

¹³³ All four of these books have been published: 1) *al-Istī'āb fī ma'rifaṭ al-aṣḥāb* (Cairo, 196–); 2) *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa faḍliḥ* (Cairo, 1975); 3) *al-Tamhīd li-mā fī l-Muwatta'* min al-ma'ānī wa l-asānīd, 26 vols. (Rabat, 1974–92); 4) *al-Istidhkār al-jāmi' li-madhāhib fuqahā' al-amṣār wa 'ulamā' al-aqlār fīmā tadammannahu "al-Muwatta'" min ma'ānī al-ra'y wa al-āthār*, 30 vols. (Beirut: Dār Qutaybah and Cairo: Dār al-Wa'y, 1993).

¹³⁴ *Tadhkira*, III, 227–9. The undated Dār al-Fikr edition of this book consists of 2312 topics, the first 91 of which are theological, the following 18 of which are concerned with legal principles (*uṣūl*), and the remainder of which cover all aspects

¹²⁷ See above, II.1.

¹²⁸ *Tadhkira*, III, 192.

to articulate a genuinely Sunnī 'ḥadīth folk' legal *madhhab* not only influenced the paradigm-shifting mystic Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, but appears to have anticipated the *salafī* movement of Ibn Taymiyya by three centuries. Unfortunately, Western scholarship has focused almost exclusively on Ibn Ḥazm's enjoyable, but largely inconsequential treatise on love, and thus our understanding of his creative efforts remains in its infancy.¹³⁵

Meanwhile, in Herat there flourished another Sūfī Shaykh al-Islām as well as another master transmitter of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Abū Ismā'īl 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī (d. 481/1088), author of the famous Sūfī guide *Manāzil al-sā'irīn*, is honored by al-Dhahabī with the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām for his profound knowledge of *ḥadīth*, staunch anti-speculative theology stance, and ability to rise above the Ḥanafī-Shāfi'ī quarrels of his day.¹³⁶ The second most prestigious scholar of Herat was Abū Dharr al-Harawī (d. 434/1042–3) who synthesized three recensions of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and transmitted it from the central location of Mecca.¹³⁷ Abū Dharr studied briefly with al-Dāraquṭnī in Baghdad on his way to Mecca, and his choice of the Mālikī legal

of Islamic law. Note that al-Dhahabī studied *al-Muḥallā* closely and made an abridgement of this book.

¹³⁵ Two books that move beyond the seductive *Tawq al-ḥamāma* are Goldziher's *The Zāhirīs* (translated and ed. by Wolfgang Behn, Leiden: Brill, 1971), and R. Arnaldez's *Grammaire et théologie chez Ibn Ḥazm de Cordoue* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1956). The *EL2* article by Arnaldez is also very insightful. The relationship between the post-Ibn Ḥazm Zāhirīs and Ibn Taymiyya's *salafī* movement has not, to my knowledge, been confirmed, although the ideological similarities between the two groups are striking. Al-Dhahabī's defense of Ibn Ḥazm in the *Tadhkira* against his numerous adversaries, as well as the fact that he designated him and Ibn Taymiyya as *mujtahids* in this book indicates Ibn Ḥazm's deep influence upon him.

¹³⁶ *Tadhkira*, III, 250–1. For a brief study of al-Ansari's life and works, see A. G. Ravan Farhadi, *Abdullah Ansari of Herat* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996). *Manāzil al-sā'irīn* was edited critically and translated into French by S. de Laugier de Beaurecueil as *'Abdallah al-Anṣārī al-Harawī: Les Étapes des Itinérants vers Dieu* (Cairo, 1962). 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī's Persian *Munajāt* have been translated by Wheeler Thackston in the Classics of Western Spirituality series as *Ibn 'Ata'llah: The Book of Wisdom/Kiwaja Abdullah Ansari: Intimate Conversations* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978). Finally, his collection of forty theological *ḥadīth*, *Kitāb al-arba'īn fī dalā'il al-tawḥīd* (No place, 1984), as well as his multi-volume diatribe against the proponents of speculative theology, *Dhamm al-kalām wa ahliḥ* (Medina: Maktabat al-'Ulūm wa l-Hikam, 1995), have been published.

¹³⁷ Ibn Hajar praises Abū Dharr's recension of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī in *Fath al-Bārī*, I, 9–10. His source for the Firabrī recension of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* was 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Hammuwayh (d. 381/991) of Sarakhs, who was also a transmitter of al-Dārimī's *Sunan* and the large *musnad* and *tafsīr* of the ninth-*ṭabaqa* ḥāfiẓ 'Abd b. Humayd al-Kissī (d. 249/863); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, XVI, 492–3.

madhhab with the Ash'arī theological one struck many of his contemporaries as odd, especially given his Central Asian roots.¹³⁸

Two particularly strong Iranian scholars in the city of Isfahan built upon the foundation established by al-Ṭabarānī and Abū l-Shaykh at this time. Abū 'Abdullāh Ibn Manda (d. 395/1005) collected an extraordinary amount of *ḥadīth* during a journey during which he supposedly encountered 1,700 *shuyūkh*.¹³⁹ Ibn 'Asākir identifies four major sources of Ibn Manda's *ḥadīth* and remarks that his famous biographical dictionary of *ṣaḥāba* contained many errors.¹⁴⁰ Ibn Manda is reported to have been involved in a vicious dispute with his fellow 'Muḥaddith of the Age' and hometown rival, Abū Nu'aym Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh al-Iṣbahānī (d. 430/1039) due to their differences in *madhhab*.¹⁴¹ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ includes Abū Nu'aym among his list of 'seven compilers of useful books' on the account of his impressive corpus of compositions.¹⁴² His most famous book is the 689-entry biographical dictionary of pious scholars and mystics entitled *Hilyat al-awliyā'* that is both a rich source of historical information concerning Hodgson's elusive 'piety-minded' Muslims of early Islamic history, and probably was, in its day, the largest work arranged by *ṭabaqāt* that was composed after Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ *Tadhkira*, III, 201.

¹³⁹ There are four 'Ibn Mandas' in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ*: 1) Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. Manda (d. 301/914); his grandson 2) Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Muḥammad; his great-grandson 3) Abū l-Qāsim 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad b. Ishāq (d. 470/1077); and his great-great-grandson 4) Abū Zakariyyā Yahyā b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad (d. 511/1117); *Tadhkira*, II, 219; III, 157, 238 and IV, 33. All four members of the Ibn Manda dynasty lived in Isfahan.

¹⁴⁰ *Tadhkira*, III, 157. The four sources are Abū Sa'īd Ibn al-A'rābī (d. 340/951–2) of Mecca, al-Aṣamm of Nishapur, Khaythama b. Sulaymān (d. 343/955) of Syria, and al-Haytham b. Kulayb of Samarqand. All but the latter have entries in *Tadhkira*, III, 47, 53, and 51, respectively.

¹⁴¹ *Tadhkira*, III, 195. Abū Nu'aym studied with the master *ḥadīth* scholar al-Ṭabarānī and he passed his knowledge on to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and numerous teachers of Abū Ṭāhir al-Silāfi.

¹⁴² These include a history of Isfahan, a biographical dictionary of *ṣaḥāba*, and a *mustakhraj* for the *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim. All three works have been published: 1) *Kitāb tarīkh Iṣbahān: dhikr akhbār Iṣbahān*, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1990); 2) *Ma'rifaṭ al-ṣaḥāba*, 7 vols. (Riyadh, 1998); and 3) *al-Musnad al-mustakhraj 'alā Ṣaḥīḥ al-Imām Muslim*, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1996). Note that Abū Nu'aym also composed a short book of weak *ḥadīth*-transmitters in which he identifies 289 men whose material should be avoided; *Kitāb al-du'afā'* (Casablanca, 1984). Abū Nu'aym's two most popular authorities for critical comments in this book are 'Alī b. al-Madīnī and al-Bukhārī.

¹⁴³ Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-awliyā' wa ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā'* (Cairo, 1967–8). Abū Nu'aym's adoption of the *ṭabaqāt* structure was probably due to the influence of his fellow

The city of Nishapur, so prominent in the third and fourth phases, housed its final 'Imām of the *muḥaddithūn*' in the thirteenth *ṭabaqa*. Al-Ḥākim Abū 'Abdullāh (d. 405/1014) studied with a vast number of *shuyūkh*, although his primary master was the previously discussed Abū 'Alī l-Naysābūrī.¹⁴⁴ Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ honors al-Ḥākim as one of the 'seven compilers of useful compositions,' and he has the distinction of being one of the few men to have compiled significant works in all three genres of *ḥadīth* literature. The *Mustadrak 'alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* is the only *ḥadīth* compilation of the fifth phase to be included in Ibn Ḥajar's *Ithāf al-mahara*, although al-Ḥākim's incorporation of many forged *ḥadīth* in its pages led several scholars to question his competence.¹⁴⁵ Al-Ḥākim's biographical dictionary *Tārīkh Naysābūr*, was, rather surprisingly, the first significant history of his hometown.¹⁴⁶ Finally, al-Ḥākim's slightly disjointed *Ma'rifat 'ulūm al-ḥadīth* was a major milestone in the tradition of systematic articulations of the *ḥadīth* disciplines and probably served as a model for Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddima*. A final interesting quality of al-Ḥākim is his mild adherence to *tashayyū'* at this late date in the development of Sunnism, although the hostile reactions of several of his contemporaries clearly indicate this position was severely condemned in most Sunnī quarters.

The final major *ḥadīth* scholar who flourished during the fifth phase in the lands of Iran is the remarkable 'Shaykh of Khurāsān' Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066).¹⁴⁷ Despite the fact that al-Bayhaqī never studied the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'ī, the *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī, nor the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja, he acquired a massive amount of material from his primary master, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, and composed several large *ḥadīth* books, four of which are particularly significant. Each one of these tomes indicates a degree of specialization that is typical of this age:

Ṣūfī al-Sulamī's famous *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyya*, although it seems quite likely that he was familiar with Ibn Sa'd's book in the course of his research for *Kutāb ma'rifat al-ṣaḥāba*.

¹⁴⁴ *Tadhkira*, III, 162.

¹⁴⁵ It is therefore necessary to read the *Mustadrak* with al-Dhahabī's commentary on it. *Talkhīṣ al-mustadrak*, which, fortunately, has been included in the Hyderabad, Riyadh, and Cairo editions of al-Ḥākim's *al-Mustadrak*. See, for example, *al-Mustadrak 'alā l-ṣaḥīḥayn*, 5 vols. (Cairo, 1997).

¹⁴⁶ Only a fragment of a later Persian translation survives of this book, although al-Dhahabī quotes the Arabic original with great frequency in his historical works.

¹⁴⁷ *Tadhkira*, III, 219. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ includes al-Bayhaqī among the 'seven compilers of useful books' in *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*.

- 1) *al-Asmā' wa l-ṣifāt*, a clarification of the nature of the divine attributes;
- 2) *Shu'ab al-īmān*, an investigation into the 'branches' of faith;
- 3) *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, an elucidation of the Prophet Muḥammad's miracles and ethics;
- 4) *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, a truly enormous Shāfi'ī *fiqh* book that is saturated with thousands of *ḥadīths* with full *isnāds*.¹⁴⁸

It has already been suggested that al-Bayhaqī is the last of the compilers of 'original' *ḥadīth* books, although it must be born in mind that the absence of any studies of his or later scholars' *ḥadīth* books renders this hypothesis pure speculation.¹⁴⁹

Baghdad also nurtured two exceptional scholars during the fifth phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship. The 'Shaykh of the jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars,' Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khwārazmī al-Shāfi'ī, known as al-Barqānī, followed the example of Ibn Surayj a century and a half earlier by achieving a high proficiency in jurisprudence and *ḥadīth*.¹⁵⁰ He is reported to have reorganized the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim as a *musnad* book (i.e., according to *ṣaḥāba*), and his numerous students include Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī, Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, and the other extraordinary Baghdadī of this period, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071). A student of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī, among many others, al-Khaṭīb earned the honorific '*Muḥaddith* of Syria and Iraq' from al-Dhahabī due to his eleven year sojourn in Damascus and Aleppo. Many of his monographs on various *ḥadīth* disciplines have been mentioned in the previous chapter's discussion of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddima*, and his most famous work is unquestionably the 7831-biography history of Baghdad. Al-Khaṭīb's vast corpus seems to have closed the era of Baghdad's primacy in *ḥadīth* scholarship that began in the eighth *ṭabaqa* with

¹⁴⁸ It was a common practice among jurists to quote fragments of the *matns* of famous *ḥadīths* without mentioning their *isnāds* in the interests of brevity. Al-Bayhaqī's *Sunan al-kubrā* follows the pattern of *sunan ḥadīth* books like those of Abū Dāwūd and al-Nasā'ī, and thus includes full *isnāds* for each *ḥadīth*, for a vast array of legal topics. The 1925 Hyderabad edition of *al-Sunan al-kubrā* is based upon the recension that Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ transmitted from his teachers in Khurāsān.

¹⁴⁹ The honor of being the last 'original' *muṣannif* might actually belong to the sixth phase scholar al-Baghawī, whose 4200-*ḥadīth* book, *Sharḥ al-sunna*, and 2840-*ḥadīth* work *Maṣābiḥ al-sunna*, merit closer investigation.

¹⁵⁰ *Tadhkira*, III, 183. Al-Barqānī studied with the Shaykh al-Islām Abū Bakr al-Isma'īlī.

Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Maʿīn, ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī, Ibn Saʿd, and al-Fallās.

Egypt was blessed with two master *ḥadīth* scholars during the fifth phase who lived under very different circumstances. ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. Saʿīd al-Azdī (d. 409/1018) is the final one of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's 'seven compilers of useful compositions' and reportedly studied with and taught al-Dāraquṭnī.¹⁵¹ ʿAbd al-Ghanī was praised by al-Barqānī, and was a teacher of the second major Egyptian *ḥadīth* scholar of this period, Abū Ishāq al-Ḥabbāl (d. 482/1089). Al-Dhahabī recognizes al-Ḥabbāl, a bookseller of Andalusī origin, as the '*Muḥaddith* of Egypt,' and mentions that he was prevented from teaching *ḥadīth* to many students during the Fāṭimid period due to official state policies. These restrictions appear to be similar to those which suppressed the 'Shaykh of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf' in Mecca, Abū l-Qāsim Saʿd b. ʿAlī al-Zanjānī (d. 471/1078–9).¹⁵² Both scholars managed to teach a few students in their own homes during this time, and it is unclear from the *Tadhkira* exactly what effect the Fāṭimid caliphs had on Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship in general.

A review of the additions to our *ḥadīth* library that were composed during the fifth phase of my interpretation of al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* indicates a shift in emphasis from general compilations to more specialized biographical and technical works. The only major *ḥadīth* compilations that have been added to the collection from the past two *ṭabaqāt* are the *Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim, the four large books of al-Bayhaqī, the *Tamhīd* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, and the *Muḥallā* of Ibn Ḥazm. Three biographical dictionaries of *ṣaḥāba* were compiled in this period for reasons that are not entirely clear.¹⁵³ Al-Ḥākim's history of Nishapur, Abū Nuʿaym's encyclopedia of 'piety-minded' scholars, and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's history of Baghdad elevated the genre of biographical dictionaries to new heights. Finally, the hitherto undeveloped genre of *ḥadīth* disciplines received comprehensive articulations by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī,

and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, as well as dozens of specialized books by the latter and *al-Muʿtaḥif wa l-mukhtalif* of the Egyptian ʿAbd al-Ghanī b. Saʿīd. It appears that the 'classical sources' of Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature were more or less completed by the end of the fifth phase, and that the primary task for succeeding generations of *ḥadīth* scholars was to transmit and synthesize the daunting library of erudition that was compiled by several dozen scholars over a three century period.

III.7 Phase 6: Transition and the loss of the East (c. 480–600/1087–1203)

The intensity and volume of *ḥadīth* compilation of the preceding five phases being what it was, a period of notably less impressive achievements can be seen, perhaps, as having been inevitable. We have already observed that al-Dhahabī identifies a mere four Shuyūkh al-Islām in the first century of this phase and that the seventeenth *ṭabaqa* is the first one totally devoid of any scholars of this caliber. This qualitative decline is particularly surprising due to its occurrence during a period of staunchly Sunnī Seljuq rule. Why did Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship drop so precipitously during an age that is known to be an age of Sunnī revival?

One hypothesis might be that the Seljuk institution of the *madrasa* critically wounded the traditional networks of learning. This argument immediately loses some credibility in light of George Makdisi's observations that the curriculum of these schools was hardly standardized and that study of *ḥadīth* was practically inevitable.¹⁵⁴ Daphna Ephrat has argued that the impact of the institution of the *madrasa* was not particularly significant in Baghdad during this 'age of transition' and that traditional scholarly networks continued to thrive.¹⁵⁵ Given all of the challenges faced by the scholars mentioned in the previous five phases, it does seem difficult to believe that a few well endowed schools could be held responsible for the small number of useful contributions to *ḥadīth* literature composed during this period.

¹⁵¹ *Tadhkira*, III, 167. His fame rested largely on his book *al-Muʿtaḥif wa l-mukhtalif* that was useful for discerning the identities of *ḥadīth* transmitters in the *isnāds*, as well as for establishing the correct orthography of thousands of names.

¹⁵² *Tadhkira*, III, 253 (al-Ḥabbāl); 243 (al-Zanjānī).

¹⁵³ A tempting explanation for this phenomenon would be that the dramatic rise of both Fāṭimī and Imāmī Shīʿism, both schools of which were known for their hostility towards the *ṣaḥāba*, stimulated a Sunnī reaction in the form of encyclopedias honoring the lives of the *ṣaḥāba*. Early Imāmī Shīʿi attitudes towards the *ṣaḥāba* are discussed below in chapter VI.3.1.

¹⁵⁴ George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges* (Edinburgh, 1981), 81–4.

¹⁵⁵ Daphna Ephrat, *A Learned Society in a Period of Transition* (Albany, 2000), 68–72.

A second potential culprit for this qualitative drop in *ḥadīth* scholarship is the rise of *ṭarīqa* Ṣūfism. Many of al-Dhahabī's Shuyūkh al-Islām, such as 'Aṭīyya b. Sa'īd of al-Andalus and 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī of Herat, were highly committed Ṣūfis who expressed their piety by means of both esoteric spiritual exercises and exoteric dedication to the great Sunnī *ḥadīth* books. The virtual absence of any mystical Shuyūkh al-Islām from the fifteenth to twenty-first *ṭabaqāt* is interesting, but can hardly be interpreted as an impact of the poorly understood transformation of local Ṣūfī groups into world-wide orders.¹⁵⁶

My opinion, in the absence of any clear explanation from al-Dhahabī, is that the library of *ḥadīth* books had grown so large over the course of three centuries of frenetic compilation that scholars had to devote the bulk of their energy to the preservation and organization of their predecessors' accomplishments. Many works had been lost during the course of this venture, such as most of the books of 'Alī b. al-Madīnī,¹⁵⁷ and it seems quite feasible that most scholars would shift their attention towards abridgements, commentaries, and reference works in order to facilitate the acquisition of the greatest diversity of this literature as was humanly possible. The transition away from the compilation of *ḥadīth* books can be seen already between the fourth and fifth phases, as only al-Hākim al-Naysābūrī and al-Bayhaqī composed *ḥadīth* books 'from scratch,' whereas those of Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr were extensive commentaries on relatively short legal works.¹⁵⁸ It should not be surprising, then, that the majority of the noteworthy compositions of the sixth phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship are biographical in nature, just as they were in the phase that preceded it.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Whether the Shaykh al-Islām al-Nawawī was a mystic or ascetic is something for his biographers to decide; al-Dhahabī, at least, describes his pious asceticism, as well as his erudition in the *Tadhkira*.

¹⁵⁷ *Sīyar*, XI, 60. Al-Dhahabī cites a long list of Ibn al-Madīnī's books according to what al-Hākim al-Naysābūrī heard from the Qāḍī Muḥammad b. Šāliḥ al-Hashimī; at the end of this list, al-Dhahabī reports al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's observation that he had only seen four or five of these books (*fa-jamī'un ḥādhihi l-kutub inqaradāt; ra'aynā minhā arba'atan aw khamṣa*).

¹⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥazm's *al-Muḥallā* is a commentary on his own one-volume *fiqh* book entitled *al-Mujallā*; *Tadhkira*, III, 231.

¹⁵⁹ An even more mundane yet plausible explanation for the end of 'original' *ḥadīth* books could be that the *isnād* had grown far too long by this time for com-

Several master scholars elevated the Western Iranian cities of Isfahan and Hamadhan to the highest levels of Sunnī *ḥadīth* erudition during the fifteenth and sixteenth *ṭabaqāt* of al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*.¹⁶⁰ The Shaykh al-Islām Abū l-Qāsim Ismā'īl b. Muḥammad al-Taymī (d. 535/1140–1) of Isfahan was a master of both *ḥadīth* and Qur'anic exegesis, and educated important sixth-phase scholars such as Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī, Ibn 'Asākir, and Abū Ṭāhir al-Silafī.¹⁶¹ The second of these three scholars, al-Silafī (d. 576/1180), was a Shaykh al-Islām in his own right and played a critical role in the transmission of religious knowledge from Isfahan to Alexandria.¹⁶² Al-Silafī compiled three *muḥjams* of *ḥadīth* with elevated ('*ālī*') *isnāds* that were highly valued by his students, like the important seventeenth-*ṭabaqa* scholars Muḥammad Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, 'Abd al-Ghanī b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī, and Abd al-Qādir al-Ruhāwī.¹⁶³ The final Isfahanī Shaykh al-Islām of this period is Abū Mūsā l-Madīnī (d. 581/1185), the compiler of the fourth of the four *ṣaḥāba* biographical dictionaries that were synthesized by the famous historian 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr in his standard work *Usd al-Ghāba*.¹⁶⁴ Finally, the

pilation to be a practical task. Certainly the numerous 'elevated' *isnāds* of *ḥadīth* cited throughout al-Dhahabī's books occupy far more space than most of the actual texts and are of little interest for all save the most dedicated *ḥadīth* specialists.

¹⁶⁰ One Isfahanī scholar of this period who does not appear in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* despite his significant role in the transmission of many large *ḥadīth* books is the centarian Abū 'Alī al-Haddād, al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad (d. 515/1121). Abū 'Alī heard the following books from Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī: al-Qa'nabī's recension of the *Muwatta'*, Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, al-Tayālīsī's *Musnad*, the *Musnad* of al-Hārith b. Abī Usāma, and Abū Nu'aym's own *Hilyat al-awliyā'*, *al-Mustakhraj 'alā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *al-Mustakhraj 'alā Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Al-Dhahabī reports that Abū 'Alī also acquired al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Muḥjam al-awsat*, *al-Ṭabaqāt* of 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, and various collections of the *ḥadīth* of Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Awzā'ī, and 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī; see *Sīyar*, XIX, 303–7. Abū 'Alī's son, Abū Nu'aym 'Ubayd Allāh, known as Ibn al-Haddād (d. 517/1123), only lived fifty-four years, but is included in the fifteenth *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*; *Tadhkira*, IV, 42.

¹⁶¹ *Tadhkira*, IV, 50–2. Al-Dhahabī reports that the slightly younger Shaykh al-Islām Abū Mūsā l-Madīnī knew of no scholar at the turn of the six century who was more knowledgeable of *ḥadīth* than Abū l-Qāsim al-Taymī, and that he composed Qur'anic commentaries in both Arabic and Persian. Abū Mūsā also mentions that al-Taymī refused to associate with the political rulers (*salāṭīn*) or even other scholars who did so.

¹⁶² *Tadhkira*, IV, 63. Al-Silafī lived in Alexandria the last sixty-five years of his century-long life.

¹⁶³ The first *muḥjam* consisted of scholars of his home city Isfahan, the second of Baghdad, and the third of those he met during his ten year travel. The last of these three books has been published: *Muḥjam al-safar* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1993).

¹⁶⁴ *Tadhkira*, IV, 86. Abū Mūsā studied with the ascetic Ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī

sixteenth-*ṭabaqa* Shaykh al-Islām 'Abū l-'Alā' al-Hamadhānī (d. 569/1173-4) was a master of Arabic grammar and the variant Qur'ānic readings, and his major pupil al-Ruhāwī reports that his books were popular in Khwārazm and Syria.¹⁶⁵

Three excellent Andalusī scholars also flourished during this period in the wake of al-Dānī, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, and Ibn Ḥazm. Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. Abī Naṣr al-Ḥumaydī (d. 488/1095) was a close disciple of Ibn Ḥazm on the island of Majorca and dispersed his unique Zāhirī teachings and books throughout the central and eastern Islamic lands.¹⁶⁶ Al-Ḥumaydī is reported to have devoted many years of his life to the examination of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and also exerted himself to compose a universal history of Muslim scholars arranged by their death dates. Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan al-Jayyānī al-Ghassānī (d. 498/1104-5) never left al-Andalus, although his study of the *ḥadīth*-transmitters found in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim achieved a high degree of popularity in the East.¹⁶⁷ Finally, the 'Scholar (*ʿālim*) of the Maghrib,' al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ b. Musā al-Sabtī (d. 544/1149) composed several important works,¹⁶⁸ and his study of the obscure expressions (*al-gharā'ib*) found in the *Muwaṭṭa'* and the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* books is further evidence of the shift of the scholarly focus of the sixth phase from the compilation of large original *ḥadīth* books to the elucidation of the most exalted books of the Sunnī *ḥadīth* tradition.

and taught Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī, al-Ḥāzimī, 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī, and al-Ruhāwī. Al-Dhahabī also reports that Abū Mūsā knew al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's *Ma'rifaṭ 'ulūm al-ḥadīth* by heart.

¹⁶⁵ *Tadhkira*, IV, 80. One final scholar from this region found in *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* but not in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* is Abū l-Khayr al-Ṭāḳānī, Aḥmad b. Ismā'īl (d. 590/1194). Al-Ṭāḳānī was born in Qazvīn, studied in Nishapur, and taught in his native city and the prestigious Nizāmiyya college in Baghdad. Ibn al-Najjār reports that al-Ṭāḳānī transmitted the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, *Musnad* of Ibn Rāhawayh, *Tārīkh* of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, and *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*, and *al-Ba'th* of al-Bayhaqī; *Siyar*, XXI, 190-2.

¹⁶⁶ *Tadhkira*, IV, 13. He also studied with Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, and the famous transmitter of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, Karīma al-Marwazīyya, in Mecca.

¹⁶⁷ *Tadhkira*, IV, 23. Al-Jayyānī was a student Ibn 'Abd al-Barr. The title of this book is *Taqyīd al-muḥmal wa tamyīz al-mushkil* and was published in 1997 in Morocco by al-Wizārat al-Awqāf wa-l-Shu'ūn al-Islāmiyya.

¹⁶⁸ These books include a study of the ethics of the Prophet (*al-Shifā'*), a comprehensive biographical dictionary of Mālikī jurists (*Tarṭīb al-mudārīk wa taqrīb al-masālik*), a history of al-Andalus and the Maghrib, and a commentary on the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim (*al-Ikmāl fī sharḥ Muslim*).

The knowledge of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī extended another generation in his home city in large part due to the labors of the Amīr Ibn Mākūlā.¹⁶⁹ The most famous book of this colorful personality, *al-Ikmāl* has already been encountered in the previous chapter in the connection with Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's curriculum for the aspiring *ḥadīth* scholars. His teachers include the son of Ibn Shāhīn, and he received praise in Egypt from al-Ḥabbāl for his knowledge of *ḥadīth* and *adab*. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the location and date of his death, there is consensus that Ibn Mākūlā was the victim of foul play by his Turkish bodyguard, a fate quite unusual among al-Dhahabī's selection of *ḥuffāz*.

The city of Marw in Khurāsān also enjoyed a florescence of *ḥadīth* scholarship during this generally lackluster period. The Shāfi'ī 'Reviver of the Sunna' and *mujtahid* Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn b. Mas'ūd al-Baghawī (d. 516/1122) composed four major works, two of which are large *ḥadīth* collections.¹⁷⁰ Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Sam'ānī (d. 510/1116) taught public preaching (*wā'iz*) for several years at the Nizāmiyya *madrasa* in Baghdād, was a companion of the Shaykh al-Islām al-Silafī, and read al-Khaṭīb's massive history of Baghdad.¹⁷¹ He passed away in middle age when his son, Abū Sa'd, was a mere five-year old, but fortunately his knowledge was transmitted to him via another prominent Marwazī scholar, Abū Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Subḥī (d. 548/1153).¹⁷² Al-Dhahabī provides an

¹⁶⁹ *Tadhkira*, IV, 3. Al-Dhahabī reports a total lack of consensus as to this scholar's death date. Ibn 'Asākir puts it at about 470 in Jurjān, Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī suggests 485 or 486 in al-Ahwāz, Ibn al-Najjār posits 475, Ibn al-Jawzī reports it at 475 or 486, and Ibn Khallikān offers 479 and 487.

¹⁷⁰ *Tadhkira*, IV, 37. These two books are *Sharḥ al-sunna* and *Maṣābiḥ al-sunna*. This latter book included 4,719 *ḥadīth*, 2251 of which came from either al-Bukhārī or Muslim, according to Robson. Walī al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Tibrizī (d. around 738/1337) added 1,511 *ḥadīth* to this collection in his popular collection *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ*, and this book was translated into English by Robson as *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ* (Lahore: S. M. Ashraf, 1960-4). Note that al-Baghawī does not include the *isnāds* of the *ḥadīth* in either *Maṣābiḥ al-sunna* nor *Mishkāt al-maṣābiḥ*, but merely indicates whether or not they were *ṣaḥīḥ* or *ḥasan*. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ is particularly critical of al-Baghawī's innovation of restricting the term *ṣaḥīḥ* exclusively to the *ḥadīth* from the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, and his employment of *ḥasan* for all other material extracted from books, such as the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd and *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī, even if the individual *ḥadīth* that he has selected from these latter two sources is considered by most critics as authoritative; *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 182.

¹⁷¹ *Tadhkira*, IV, 43.

¹⁷² *Tadhkira*, IV, 73.

insightful list of some of the *ḥadīth* books that al-Subḥī taught both Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī and Abū Sa'd's son, 'Abd al-Raḥīm, that includes the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'ī, the *Raqa'iq* of Ibn al-Mubārak, and *Hilyat al-awliyā'* of Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣḥāhānī. The 'Crown of Islām,' Abū Sa'd 'Abd al-Karīm al-Sam'ānī (d. 562/1167), traveled to hear scholars from Bukhara to Damascus, and even entered Jerusalem during the time of its occupation by the Latin Crusader Kingdom.¹⁷³ His famous biographical dictionary, *al-Ansāb*, is arranged by *nisba* and aided greatly al-Dhahabī's own historical inquiries. Although Abū Sa'd's son 'Abd al-Raḥīm does not receive an individual biographical notice in the *Tadhkira*, it should be clear from what al-Dhahabī mentioned of his studies with al-Subḥī and his father why Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ traveled all the way to Marw to study with him.

Two final scholars of the first two *ṭabaqāt* of the sixth phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship merit mention for the volume of their studies in Syria. Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī (d. 507/1113-4) spent a good portion of his life walking around the Eastern lands and even served as a paid copyist of the *ḥadīth* books of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Māja.¹⁷⁴ His two favorite teachers are reported to have been Sa'd b. 'Alī al-Zanjānī in Mecca and the mystic 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī in Herat. Ibn Ṭāhir was an adherent to the Zāhirī *madhhab*, and despite his detailed studies of the six canonical *ḥadīth* books, his reputation was tarnished by his numerous grammatical errors.¹⁷⁵

The other major Syrian scholar of this period is the 'Boast of the *imāms*' (*fakhr al-a'imma*) Abū l-Qāsim 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn 'Asākir (d. 571/1175).¹⁷⁶ His famous eighty-volume biographical dictionary

Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq has earned the distinction of being one the largest books in Islamic civilization, and his studies with Abū 'Alī al-Hamadhānī and Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī facilitated the spread of the knowledge of elevated *isnāds* throughout Syria.

The final *ṭabaqa* of the sixth phase, as noted previously, is the first one totally bereft of a Shaykh al-Islām in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*. Al-Dhahabī does identify three master scholars in *al-Mūqīza* who lived during this period, and I have selected three other scholars of distinction from *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* in order to connect this historical survey to the seventh, and final, phase. The first of these men is 'the Scholar of Iraq and Preacher of the horizons' Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201).¹⁷⁷ Al-Dhahabī reports that he had never seen any scholar who composed the sheer number of books as this Baghdadī Ḥanbalī teacher did. Ibn al-Jawzī's book of tarnished *ḥadīth* transmitters has been mentioned in the previous chapter as a source for al-Dhahabī's *Mizān al-ʿitdāl*, and his books on Qur'ānic disciplines, exegesis, and history are standard works of the Islamic library. Al-Dhahabī warns us, though, that the large output of Ibn al-Jawzī was accomplished at the high cost of inaccuracy, and that many of his books are plagued with errors.

The second seventeenth-*ṭabaqa* scholar mentioned in *al-Mūqīza* is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Ḥāzimī (d. 584/1188) who inherited the knowledge of Abū l-'Alā' al-Hamadhānī.¹⁷⁸ Al-Ḥāzimī left his hometown of Hamadhan and settled in Baghdad, where he devoted his considerable talents in the disciplines of *ḥadīth* scholarship to the elucidation of the fundamental Shāfi'ī legal book *al-Muḥadhdhab* by Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī. He also composed a book concerning the abrogation of *ḥadīth* by other *ḥadīth*, expanded the *Ikmāl* of Ibn Mākūlā, and shared his mastery of genealogies with numerous students.

The final scholar of this period mentioned by al-Dhahabī in *al-Mūqīza* is the Ḥanbalī 'Abd al-Qādir al-Ruhāwī (d. 612/1215). Born a slave, al-Ruhāwī was manumitted and studied *ḥadīth* with Abū l-'Alā' al-Hamadhānī, Ibn 'Asākir, and al-Silafī.¹⁷⁹ His student Ibn Nuqta reports that he was reliable but reluctant to teach *ḥadīth*. Some of the fortunate scholars to benefit from his erudition in Harran

¹⁷³ *Tadhkira*, IV, 75. His students include his son 'Abd al-Raḥīm and Abū l-Qāsim Ibn 'Asākir.

¹⁷⁴ *Tadhkira*, IV, 27-9.

¹⁷⁵ Recall that Goldziher keenly suggested that Ibn Ṭāhir's large *aṭrāf* book based on the compilations of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Māja established the foundation for the institution of the 'six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books' since it predates by at least a century the *Jāmi' al-uṣūl* of Majd al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr and the *Kamāl* of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī, two books that might also be credited with this accomplishment. This is also the opinion of Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ra'ūf; see his article "Ḥadīth Literature—1," *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature: Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, I (Cambridge, 1983), 287.

¹⁷⁶ *Tadhkira*, IV, 82. Al-Dhahabī reports that Ibn 'Asākir studied with 1300 male and over 80 female scholars in the course of his lifetime.

¹⁷⁷ *Tadhkira*, IV, 92.

¹⁷⁸ *Tadhkira*, IV, 105.

¹⁷⁹ *Tadhkira*, IV, 121.

were the Andalusī al-Zakī al-Birzālī and al-Diyā' al-Maqdisī, both of whom settled in Syria and contributed to the 'Triumph of Syria' in the seventh phase.

Three other scholars of the rather lackluster seventeenth *ṭabaqa* warrant brief comments. Ibn Bashkuwal Khalaf b. 'Abd al-Malik (d. 578/1182) achieved the title '*Muḥaddith* al-Andalus' from al-Dhahabī and preserved much useful information about western Islamic scholarship in his history *Ṣila Tārīkh Ibn al-Faradī*.¹⁸⁰ Another Andalusī of some importance is the 'Shaykh of the Maghrib' Abū Muḥammad Ibn 'Ubayd Allāh (d. 591/1195) of Almeria, who continued the highly refined tradition of the major Qur'ānic readings and achieved a mastery of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim.¹⁸¹ Finally, 'the *Muḥaddith* al-Islām' 'Abd al-Ghanī b. 'Abd al-Wahid al-Maqdisī (d. 600/1204) synthesized the erudition of al-Silafī and Abū Mūsā al-Madīnī, and his biographical dictionary *al-Kamāl* contributed to the institution of the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books.¹⁸² His students unquestionably contributed to the 'triumph of Syria' in the seventh phase, as they included the recently mentioned 'Abd al-Qādir Ruhāwī, al-Diyā' al-Maqdisī, and Abū 'Abdullāh al-Yūnīnī.

It is clear from this brief historical survey that the master *ḥadīth* scholars of the sixth phase devoted their energies to the compilation of biographical dictionaries and analyses of what gradually became known as the 'six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books.' While Ibn 'Asākir and Ibn al-Jawzī may have set new records in size and quantity of book production, few men left works that were not thoroughly reworked and improved by master scholars during the Mamlūk period.¹⁸³ The seminal books of Abū Muḥammad al-Baghawī, Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī and Qādī 'Iyāḍ did stand the test of time, although these appear to be exceptions to the rule. While the sixth phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship does include several dozen scholars of a high caliber, it appears to have been primarily a period of transition from the

age of original composition and criticism to one of synthesis, organization, and historical reflection.

III.8 Phase 7: The triumph of Syria (c. 600–720/1203–1320)

Al-Dhahabī devotes remarkably little space in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* to the scholars of the four final *ṭabaqāt*. It appears that the catastrophic impact of the Mongol invasions of the cities of Central Asia and Khurāsān may be the most likely cause for the nearly total absence of master *ḥadīth* scholars from anywhere east of Iraq during this period.¹⁸⁴ These calamities in the east, as well as the fall of Cordoba and Seville in the west, appear to have led to a consolidation of *ḥadīth* scholars in Syria as well as Egypt. Four of the six Shuyūkh al-Islām of the last four *ṭabaqāt* lived in Syria, and the remaining two spent the better parts of their lives in Egypt. The impact of the *madrasa* is also visible in this period, as the majority of the scholars in this section appear to have held teaching posts at many of these new schools. Finally, the trends of synthesis and historical compilation seem to have fully eclipsed the tradition of *ḥadīth* compilation during this period, and there is a marked rise in quality and quantity of books concerning the *ḥadīth* disciplines.

Six master scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth *ṭabaqāt* dominated the field of *ḥadīth* scholarship. I have already discussed the importance of the Shaykh al-Islām Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ in the course of my discussion of his authoritative classification of the *ḥadīth* disciplines earlier in this book, and have stressed the importance of his role in the transfer of works such as al-Bayhaqī's *al-Sunan al-kubrā* from pre-Mongol Khurāsān to Ayyūbid Syria. The other Shaykh al-Islām of this period, 'Abd al-'Azīm b. 'Abd al-Qawiyy al-Mundhirī (d. 656/1258) left his native Gaza to teach at al-Dār al-Kāmilīyya in Cairo and

¹⁸⁰ *Tadhkira*, IV, 90. The list of Ibn Bashkuwal's book titles indicates his interest in the lives of important early *ḥadīth* scholars, such as al-A'mash, Ibn al-Mubārak, Ibn 'Uyayna, and al-Nasā'ī.

¹⁸¹ *Tadhkira*, IV, 110.

¹⁸² *Tadhkira*, IV, 111.

¹⁸³ Two examples that first come to mind are the *Ikmāl* of Ibn Mākūlā, which was ultimately rendered irrelevant by the prosopographical works of al-Nawawī, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn Ḥajar, and the *Kamāl* of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī, which was edited meticulously and vastly expanded by some 1700 entries by al-Mizzī.

¹⁸⁴ The devastation of the Mongols in the form of the first Muslim Ilkhān, Ghāzān, even reached Damascus in 699/1299–1300, as al-Dhahabī lists several dozen casualties in the twenty-first *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* and claims to have mentioned over 190 scholars who perished during this year in *Tārīkh al-Islām*; *Tadhkira*, 186–7. The Ilkhānid occupation lasted barely five months, although Ghāzān did invade Syria again in the winter of 700/1300–1 and in 702/1303; see P. M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades* (New York: Longman, 1986), 110–11. For more about Ghāzān, see David Morgan, *Medieval Persia 1040–1797* (New York: Longman, 1988), 72–7.

compiled a famous *ḥadīth* work in the genre of pious exhortations titled *Kūtab al-targhib wa l-tarhīb*.¹⁸⁵ The 'Shaykh of the Sunna' al-Ḍiyā' Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Wāhid (d. 643/1245) studied with Ibn al-Jawzī and 'Abd al-Raḥīm b. Abī Sa'd al-Sam'ānī, and is reported to have made two trips to the sixth-phase capital of *ḥadīth* erudition, Isfahan.¹⁸⁶ Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad al-Ba'lbakkī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 658/1261), known as al-Yūnīnī, was a major student of 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī and was rumored to have memorized both the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and the better part of the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal.¹⁸⁷ Another Ḥanbalī of renown during this period was the 'Muḥaddith of Iraq' Ibn Nuqṭa (d. 629/1232), a pupil of Ibn al-Jawzī and al-Ruhāwī, and the compiler of a supplement to Ibn Mākūlā's *Ikmāl*.¹⁸⁸ Finally, the 'scholar of the Maghrib,' Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 659/1261), is the only nineteenth-*ṭabaqa* scholar identified in *al-Mūqīza* and was held in particularly high esteem for his transmission of Abū Dharr al-Harawī's recension of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.¹⁸⁹ The total absence of original *ḥadīth* compilations by these master scholars is evident, and appears to confirm Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's previously cited opinion in the *Muqaddima* concerning the inadmissibility of *ḥadīth* that are not found in any of the major books of the earlier eras.¹⁹⁰

The universal reluctance of the master *ḥadīth* scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth *ṭabaqāt* to compile *ḥadīth* books stimulated a major resurgence in biographical dictionaries and histories. The most famous historian of this period was the 'Boast of the scholars,' 'Izz

¹⁸⁵ *Tadhkira*, IV, 153. This book, which does not include *isnāds*, is based upon *ḥadīth* found in the 'Six books' (minus Ibn Māja), the *Muwatta'* of Mālik, *Musnads* of Ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Ya'lā al-Mawṣilī, and al-Bazzāz, the three *Muḥjams* of al-Ṭabarānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Ibn Ḥibbān, and *al-Mustadrak* of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī; see 'Abd al-Ra'ūf, "Ḥadīth Literature—1," 282.

¹⁸⁶ *Tadhkira*, IV, 133.

¹⁸⁷ *Tadhkira*, IV, 155. Al-Yūnīnī appears to have been a mystic, for al-Dhahabī states that he "combined the disciplines of divine law (*sharī'a*) and mystical verification (*ḥaqīqa*)."

¹⁸⁸ *Tadhkira*, IV, 138.

¹⁸⁹ *Tadhkira*, IV, 161–2. Al-Dhahabī obtained Ibn Sayyid al-Nās's transmission of Abū Dharr's recension of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* by *ijāza* from one of Ibn Sayyid al-Nās's pupils.

¹⁹⁰ See above, II.1. One major *ḥadīth* scholar absent from *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* who contributed to the 'triumph of Syria' is Yūsuf b. Khalīl (d. 648/1250) who settled in Aleppo. Yūsuf transported many large *ḥadīth* books from his native Isfahan to Syria: al-Dhahabī mentions *Ḥiṣyat al-awliyā'*, al-Ṭabarānī's *al-Muḥjam al-kabīr*, Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, al-Dāraqutnī's *Sunan*, al-Ṭahāwī's *al-Āthār*, and al-Ṭayālīsī's *Musnad*, among others; *Ṣiyar*, XXIII, 151–5. Note that the primary surviving recension of Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is the one that Yūsuf transmitted.

al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233), author of the universal history *al-Kāmil*, and the dictionary of *ṣaḥāba* based upon the books of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Ibn Manda, Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣfahānī, and Abū Mūsā al-Madīnī.¹⁹¹ One of Ibn al-Athīr's students, the 'Historian of Iraq' Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad al-Dubaythī (d. 637/1240), composed a large history of Wāsiṭ and an appendix to Abū Sa'd al-Sam'ānī's history of Baghdad.¹⁹² The 'Historian of the Age' Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643/1245) followed in the path of his teacher Ibn al-Jawzī and composed a plethora of historical-biographical works, including a sixteen volume addition to al-Khaṭīb's *Tārīkh Baghdād*.¹⁹³ Much of the historical material of these latter two scholars probably was lost during the infamous sack of Baghdad by Hulegu in 656/1258, and the severe consequences of this traumatic event on the Sunnī tradition of *ḥadīth* scholarship are perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in al-Dhahabī's agonizing list of obituaries at the end of the biographical notice of al-Mundhirī.¹⁹⁴

Given the paucity of information that al-Dhahabī provides for the master *ḥadīth* scholars of the final two *ṭabaqāt* of the *Tadhkira*, and the fact that the majority of them were his teachers or contemporaries, it is appropriate to close this historical survey of the first seven centuries of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship by returning to a basic question: How does this name-saturated discussion contribute to the primary goal of this book, namely the investigation into the emergence of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century? Why were we wandering around Herat and Cordoba in the fifth/eleventh century when the primary sources for the remainder of this book are third/ninth century books by three Baghdādī scholars?

The first justification for this historical adventure is that it is a direct response to the overwhelmingly *ahistorical* approach to the *ḥadīth* literature in Western Islamic Studies. One searches in vain for a description of the history of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship over its first six or seven centuries in a European language. Modern academics are not entirely to blame for this situation, since one of the most popular books of *ḥadīth* criticism, Ibn Ḥajar's *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, is itself *ahistorical* in its mode of presentation: an entry often contains critical opinions of a scholar from the eighth *ṭabaqa*, like Ibn Ḥanbal, followed

¹⁹¹ *Tadhkira*, IV, 129.

¹⁹² *Tadhkira*, IV, 139. He was also a master of the variant Qur'ānic readings, poetry and *adab*.

¹⁹³ *Tadhkira*, IV, 147.

¹⁹⁴ *Tadhkira*, IV, 154.

by one from the tenth *ṭabaqa*, like al-Nasā'ī, juxtaposed with the likes of Ibn Ḥibbān (twelfth *ṭabaqa*), Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (ninth *ṭabaqa*) and Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān (seventh *ṭabaqa*).¹⁹⁵ While alphabetically-arranged Mamlūk-era critical biographical dictionaries are extremely useful reference works for the identification of names in *isnāds*, they are of limited utility for the historian of the earlier periods of Islamic civilization who wishes to comprehend how a particular scholar fits into the greater narrative of Sunnī *ḥadīth* transmission.

A second reason for this survey is to demonstrate that the history of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship is far more than the story of the compilation of the 'six canonical books.' It is imperative for the student of Islam to recognize that the Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature entered its richest phases *after* the compilation of these exalted books. My historical investigation vividly illustrates the explosive growth in the *ḥadīth* library that occurred in the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries, as well as the shift from 'original' compilations to historical works during the course of the fourth through sixth phases. Finally, the fact that the peak period of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism took place during the century after the compilation of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim demonstrates the importance of investigating the origins of this two-century process in order to understand the foundation upon which these later scholars constructed their books.

The final goal of this seven-century survey is to demonstrate the existence of individual personalities in the history of *ḥadīth* transmission. Hodgson's largely faceless 'piety-minded' scholars and al-Mizzī's endless lists of names tend to obscure the humanity of *ḥadīth* scholars and their personal qualities that make them distinct from one another. Al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* offers a truly eclectic crowd of *ḥadīth* scholars, from Ṣūfīs to *qāḍīs*, and Mālikīs to Zāhirīs, and sheds light on individuals with charismatic personalities, such as Ibn al-Mubārak, Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ḥibbān, and Ibn Ḥazm. Certainly any of the major scholars whose books are found in the Sunnī *ḥadīth* library merits the sort of attention that Western academics invest in al-Shāfi'ī, al-Ghazālī, Ibn 'Arabī, and Ibn Khaldūn, for there is much more to Islamic thought than the principles of jurisprudence, mystical states, and the philosophy of history.

¹⁹⁵ Note that *Taḥdhīb al-taḥdhīb* was the primary text studied by Juynboll for his book *Muslim Tradition*.

CHAPTER FOUR

IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE MASTER SUNNĪ ḤADĪTH CRITICS

IV.1

The goal of this chapter is to identify and analyze the most significant *ḥadīth* critics of the nascent Sunnī tradition. While the seven-phase periodization that I articulated in the previous chapter relied exclusively upon the opinions of al-Dhahabī, this new task involves listening to the opinions of an additional nine scholars who were his predecessors. These ten sources yield a group of ninety-two men who lived in three century-long periods that dovetail more or less with the second through fourth phases of the aforementioned periodization. I have identified three qualitative grades of critics, namely primary, secondary, and 'other,' on the basis of the frequency by which each individual scholar is mentioned in the ten sources. The final section of this chapter elucidates the nature of the first period critics, reviews the role of al-Shāfi'ī in the development of *ḥadīth* scholarship, and argues for the plausibility of the historical narrative concerning the second/eight century origins of *ḥadīth* criticism as depicted in the classical Sunnī tradition.

IV.2 Sources

The sources for this chapter include seven lists and three *ṭabaqāt* presentations. Each list consists of little more than the names of a set of master *ḥadīth* scholars who are usually identified as critics. The *ṭabaqāt* presentations are substantially larger and two of them preserve both biographical information and critical opinions of each scholar. The *ṭabaqāt* presentations tend also to include a greater number of entries than the lists, and two of them even include entries for *ṣaḥāba* and *tābi'ūn*. The following outline provides an overview of the ten sources, each of which shall be described in the next few pages.

I. Lists

A) 'Alī b. al-Madīnī	(d. 234/849) ¹	24 men
B) Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj	(d. 261/874) ²	5 men
C) al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī	(d. 405/1014) ³	9 men
D) al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī	(d. 463/1071) ⁴	16 men
E) Ibn al-Jawzī	(d. 597/1201) ⁵	16 men
F) al-Mizzī	(d. 742/1341) ⁶	10 books
G) al-Dhahabī	(d. 748/1348) ⁷	23 men

II. *Ṭabaqāt* presentations

A) Ibn Abī Ḥātim	(d. 327/939) ⁸	4 generations, 18 men
B) Ibn Ḥibbān	(d. 354/965) ⁹	7 generations, 44 men
C) Ibn 'Adī	(d. 365/996) ¹⁰	6 generations, 73 men

IV.2.1 Lists

'Alī b. al-Madīnī's list enjoys the distinction of being both the earliest and most widely cited list in both Muslim and non-Muslim works. It consists of three groups of scholars and has been presented by Dickinson as the following:¹¹

¹ These sources include: Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī, *Taqdīm* (Hyderabad, 1952), 17, 129, 187, 220, 234–5, 252, 264 (all fragmentary except that found on 234–5); Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I (Aleppo: Dār Wa'y, 1396), 55; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil fī ḥu'afā' al-rijāl*, I (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1985), 132, 167 (in a truncated variant); al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, XI, 78. Western sources include Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, vol. II, 80; Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 164; and Eerik Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 50–1. These latter two scholars report to have obtained this list from a 1974 Beirut publication of the *ʿIlal* of Ibn al-Madīnī that I have not been able to consult.

² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 59.

³ *Ma'rifat ulūm al-ḥadīth*, 46–7.

⁴ *Al-Kifāya fī 'ilm al-riwāya*, ed. Aḥmad 'Umar Ḥāshim (Beirut, 1986), 109.

⁵ *Kitāb al-ḥu'afā' wa l-matrūkīn*, ed. Abū l-Fidā' 'Abdullāh al-Qāḍī, I (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1986), 7.

⁶ *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, ed. Bashshār 'Awwād Ma'rūf, I (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Risāla, 1980), 153–4.

⁷ See above, Table 2.1.

⁸ *Taqdīm*, 11–374.

⁹ *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 25–60.

¹⁰ *Al-Kāmil*, I, 59–147.

¹¹ Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 50–1. (Some dates have been modified.)

The *isnād* revolves around:

1) Medina: al-Zuhrī	(d. 124/742)
2) Mecca: 'Amr b. Dīnār	(d. 126/744)
3) Basra: Qatāda b. Di'āma	(d. 117/735)
4) Basra: Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr	(d. 132/749)
5) Kufa: Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī	(d. 127/745)
6) Kufa: al-A'mash	(d. 148/765)

Those who composed books:

1) Medina: Mālik b. Anas	(d. 179/795)
2) Medina: Muḥammad b. Ishāq	(d. 150/767)
3) Mecca: Ibn Jurayj	(d. 150/767)
4) Mecca: Ibn 'Uyayna	(d. 198/813)
5) Basra: Sa'īd b. Abī 'Arūba	(d. 156/773)
6) Ḥammād b. Salama	(d. 167/784)
7) Abū 'Awāna	(d. 176/792)
8) Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj	(d. 160/776)
9) Ma'mar b. Rāshid	(d. 153/770)
10) Kufa: Sufyān al-Thawrī	(d. 161/778)
11) Damascus: al-Awzā'ī	(d. 157/774)
12) Wāsiṭ: Hushaym b. Bashīr	(d. 183/799)

Their knowledge went to

1) Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān	(d. 198/813)
2) Yaḥyā b. Abī Zā'ida	(d. 182/798)
3) Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ	(d. 197/813)
4) Ibn al-Mubārak	(d. 181/797)
5) 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī	(d. 198/814)
6) Yaḥyā b. Ādam	(d. 203/818)

Two of the sources indicate that the knowledge of all of these men was transmitted to Ibn Ma'in, and al-Dhahabī adds the following epilogue:

[This knowledge also passed on to] Ibn Hanbal, Abū Bakr Ibn Abī Shayba, and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī; then to al-Bukhārī, Abū Ḥātim, Abū Zur'a, and Abū Dāwūd; then to al-Nasā'ī, Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī, Ibn Khuzayma, Ibn Jarīr (al-Ṭabarī); then it began to decrease, little by little, and there is no might save by God!¹²

¹² *Siyar*, XI, 78 and Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law*, 30–1.

It is significant to note that 'Ali b. al-Madīnī does not claim that any of these scholars were *ḥadīth* critics *per se*; rather, he indicates only that they were major compilers of the material. We shall see in the course of our analysis that ten of these twenty-four men are mentioned only in this list and, consequently, do not appear to have been considered critics by later generations of Sunnī scholars.

The second list is found in the introduction of Muslim b. al-Hajjāj's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, a work that I have mentioned is one of the most prestigious Sunnī books in our discussion of the third phase of *ḥadīth* compilation. Muslim identifies five men—Shu'ba b. al-Hajjāj, Mālik b. Anas, Ibn 'Uyayna, Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī—as the “Imāms of the *ḥadīth* folk” who “criticize” (*dhamma*) the transmission of *ḥadīth* from “ignoramus” (*aghbiyā*) and “unsatisfactory people” (*qawm ghayr mardīyyīn*).¹³ This list is the shortest of our ten sources, although Muslim makes it clear that it is not exhaustive.¹⁴ Despite its brevity, Muslim's list is particularly important because it is the earliest one to identify explicitly a group of scholars as *ḥadīth* critics, and it does so a mere two generations after the deaths of two of the men enumerated in it, namely Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Maḥdī.

The third list comes from the end of the fourth period of *ḥadīth* compilation and is found in the fifteenth topic of al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's paradigm-setting book of *ḥadīth* disciplines, *Ma'rifat 'ulūm al-ḥadīth*. Al-Ḥākim uses the same language as his predecessor Ibn Ḥibbān in describing Mālik, al-Awzā'ī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Shu'ba and Ibn Jurayj as “Imāms of the Muslims and jurists of the new Islamic cities (*amṣār*).”¹⁵ The remaining four scholars include the pri-

¹³ . . . *anna kathīran minnā yaqdhifūna bi-hi ilā l-aghbiyā'i min al-nāsi huwa mustankarun wa manqūlun 'an qawmin ghayr mardīyyīn minman dhamma l-riwāyati 'anhum a'immatu ahli-l-ḥadīthi mithlu Mālik b. Anas . . . ; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 59.

¹⁴ He does this by means of the comment “and others among the Imāms” (*wa ghayrihin min al-a'imma*) that follows immediately after the last of the five enumerated Imāms. Note also a second list of Imāms who scrutinized *isnāds* in Muslim's introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that consists of Ayyūb, Ibn 'Awn, Mālik, Shu'ba, Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 122.

¹⁵ *Ma'rifat 'ulūm al-ḥadīth*, 46–7. Ibn Ḥibbān uses this exact same expression with reference to the first four of al-Ḥākim's five named men as well as Ḥammād b. Salama, al-Layth b. Sa'd, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Ibn 'Uyayna, in *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 40. Although *amṣār* is usually translated as “garrison cities,” I think that “new Islamic cities” better reflects the meaning in this context, as it distinguishes pre-Islamic cities that were settled by Muslims from those that were founded during

mary critics Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and Ibn al-Mubārak as well as the unique mention of the jurist Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī and ascetic Ibrāhīm b. Ṭahmān. Although al-Ḥākim does not elucidate what exactly he means by the expression “Imāms of the Muslims,” his usage of the expression “Imām” is in itself of interest, and I shall endeavor to shed some light on its implications in the third section of this chapter.

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's list includes all five of the Imāms mentioned by Muslim in the introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ* in addition to six of the nine men recorded by al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. The sixteen men of this list are described as being “so widely recognized as sound and reliable that one cannot dispute the integrity of [their] probity.”¹⁶ This list extends from al-Awzā'ī to Ibn Ḥanbal, and the fact that only two of the men included are unique to it among the ten sources indicates that it contain a very high percentage of *ḥadīth* critics.¹⁷

We observed earlier that the author of the next list, Ibn al-Jawzī, was one of the few sixth-period master *ḥadīth* scholars and the only authoritative critic listed by al-Dhahabī in *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* after al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. Fourteen of Ibn al-Jawzī's sixteen “great Imāms . . . who declared [weak *ḥadīth* transmitters] unreliable (*jarraḥahum*)” are included among al-Dhahabī's twenty-three critics in the *Mizān*, a finding that indicates a high degree of consensus between these later critics.¹⁸

The final new list in this chapter consists of books instead of men. Abū Yūsuf al-Mizzī identifies four primary and six secondary sources of classical *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism upon which he has based his *chef d'œuvre*, the massive *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*. The four primary sources are Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, Ibn 'Adī's *al-Kāmil fī ḍu'afā'*

the Islamic conquests and were more significant in the long run as centers of Islamic civilization than military outposts.

¹⁶ *bābu l-muḥaddithi l-mashhūrī bi-l-adālati wa l-thiqati wa l-amānati lā yuḥtāju ilā tazkiyati al-mu'addil*; al-Khaṭīb, *al-Kifāya*, 109. Recall that Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ selected the best critics from among this list in his *Muqaddima*; see above, II.2, note 71.

¹⁷ The two unique names are Yazīd b. Ḥārūn and 'Affān b. Muslim. The remaining fourteen men are al-Awzā'ī, Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Layth b. Sa'd, Ḥammād b. Zayd, Mālik b. Anas, Ibn al-Mubārak, Ibn 'Uyayna, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī, Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Ma'īn, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, and Ibn Ḥanbal; al-Khaṭīb, *al-Kifāya*, 109.

¹⁸ The only two critics whom al-Dhahabī does not mention in *Mizān al-ʿitidāl* are 'Alī b. Ḥusayn b. Junayd al-Rāzī (d. 291/904) and Zakariyyā b. Yahyā al-Sājī (d. 307/919) and are unique to Ibn al-Jawzī's list.

al-rjāl, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Tārīkh Baghdād*, and Ibn 'Asākir's *Tārīkh madīnat Dimashq*. Al-Mizzī advises the ambitious *ḥadīth* scholar who remains insatiated after these hundred or so volumes to consult the following six books for critical opinions of early scholars: Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, Ibn Abī Khaythama's *Tārīkh*, Ibn Ḥibbān's *al-Thiqāt*, Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad's *Tārīkh Miṣr*, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's *Tārīkh Naysābūr*, and Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī's *Tārīkh Iṣbahān*. I have already mentioned the majority of these books in the course of our seven-period periodization of *ḥadīth* compilation, and four of these authors furnished lists or *ṭabaqāt* presentations that I made use of in this chapter.

IV.2.2 *Ṭabaqāt presentations*

The three *ṭabaqāt* presentations are by scholars who were contemporaries with one other and bridge the one and a half century lacuna between the lists of Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj and al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī. Ibn Abī Ḥatīm's *Taqdīm* is, paradoxically, by far the longest of the three *ṭabaqāt* presentations and yet consists of the smallest number of men. The eighteen entries are identified explicitly as "expert scholar critics" (*al-ʿulamāʾ al-jahābidha al-nuqqād*) and are arranged into four generations. The greater part of the volume is allotted for the six first-generation master critics, namely Mālik b. Anas, Sufyān b. 'Uyayna, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and al-Awzā'ī. The second generation consists of six prominent students of these master scholars who in turn taught Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ma'īn, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, and Ibn Numayr.¹⁹ Only Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī and Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī grace the fourth and final *ṭabaqā* of *Taqdīm*, a fact that testifies to their deep influence upon their virtuous pupil Ibn Abī Ḥatīm. Despite the fascinating array of material preserved in the *Taqdīm*, ranging from nine letters sent by al-Awzā'ī to various 'Abbāsid administrators, to 139 reports of Shu'ba's *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, to an elegy for Ibn Ma'īn, Erik Dickinson is correct in his observation that "nowhere does Ibn Abī Ḥatīm explicitly delineate the criteria he employed in selecting the scholars

¹⁹ These six second-generation students are Waki' b. al-Jarrāh, Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī, Ibn al-Mubārak, Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī, and Abū Mushir 'Abd al-A'ālā.

for the *Taqdīm*."²⁰ This ambiguity has led Dickinson to a rather radical, and, in my opinion, weak, argument that Ibn Abī Ḥatīm cast the first generation of scholars as *ḥadīth* critics in order to give the discipline of *ḥadīth* criticism a greater veneer of authenticity and historical depth.²¹ Despite my skepticism regarding Dickinson's hypothesis, I do agree that the question he has raised concerning the authenticity of the critical nature of the first generation of Ibn Abī Ḥatīm's *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics is a most valid line of inquiry and one that I will address in the appropriate place in this chapter.

Ibn Ḥibbān's *ṭabaqāt* presentation in *Kitāb al-majrūhīn* is the most useful *ṭabaqāt* presentation for this project because it includes a description of the activities of each of the seven generations of scholars. The first generation consists of three *ṣaḥāba* who merely "scrutinized" (*fattasha*) the men in transmissions and was followed by a group of ten Medinan *ṭābiʿūn*.²² The third generation includes four additional Medinan scholars who "selected men (*inqitāʾ al-rjāl*) and traveled to collect *ṣunan*," and Ibn Ḥibbān explicitly states that the greatest of them was al-Zuhri.²³ Ibn Ḥibbān asserts that the fourth generation not only preserved the material and techniques of their teachers, but introduced the practices of declaring weak transmitters unreliable (*al-qadhī fī l-duʿafāʾ*) and "transmitter criticism" (*intiqād al-rjāl*). He identifies eight members of a "group of Imāms of the Muslims and jurists of religion" and explicitly credits Mālik, Shu'ba, and Sufyān al-Thawrī

²⁰ Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 49.

²¹ "Although the association of *ḥadīth* criticism with certain famous figures increased its prestige, this association did carry a price since it undermined the integrity of *ḥadīth* criticism. In making early scholars like Mālik, Awzā'ī and Shu'ba critics, Ibn Abī Ḥatīm and his colleagues brought upon themselves the obligation of coming to terms with the alleged critical judgments, many of which were wholly inconsistent with findings of later critics" (emphases mine); Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 128.

²² The *ṣaḥāba* are 'Umar, 'Alī, and Ibn 'Abbās; the Medinan *ṭābiʿūn* are 'Alī b. al-Husayn b. 'Alī, Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Utba, Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Khārija b. Zayd b. Thābit, Sulaymān b. Yasār, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, Sālim b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar; *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 37–9.

²³ The other three scholars are Sa'īd b. Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf, Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī, and Hishām b. 'Urwa; *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 39. Note that these men collected "*ṣunan*" and not *ḥadīth*; the plural form of *ṣunna* is often equated with *ḥadīth* (for example, the four canonical *Sunan* books are *ḥadīth* compilations) but seems to have a narrower meaning more akin to "laws" than the broader concept of *ḥadīth*, which includes reports and actions attributed to the Prophet on any conceivable topic.

with the transformation of general *ḥadīth* criticism into a craft (*sinā'a*).²⁴

Ibn Ḥibbān informs us that the fifth generation of scholars learned "how to scrutinize the paths of transmission" and he identifies Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Maḥdī as the two men who "[performed] the most investigation (*tanqīr*), and were the most willing to reject weak and rejected transmitters, to the point that they made this discipline into a craft (*sinā'a*)."²⁵ This craft reached an even higher level of scrutiny (*tafṭīsh*) and clarification (*tabyīn*) in the hands of seven "Imāms" of the sixth generation, three of whom were distinguished by the magnitude of their erudition in the field of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism.²⁶ Ibn Ḥibbān concludes his *ṭabaqāt* presentation in *Kitāb al-majrūhīn* with six equally skilled teachers among his own instructors who perpetuated the "technique of criticizing reports and examining transmitters."²⁷ The significance of Ibn Ḥibbān's seven-*ṭabaqāt* presentation should be clear from the author's insightful descriptions of the members of each generation as well as the identification and biographical information of nine exceptional critics among the forty-four men.

The final source for this effort to elucidate the emergence of Sunnī *ḥadīth* criticism through the identification of the master critics is Ibn 'Adī's six-generation *ṭabaqāt* presentation found in the introduction

²⁴ illā anna min ashaddihim [i]ntiqā'an li-l-sunan wa aktharihim muwāzabatan 'alayhā ḥattā ja'alū dhālika sinā'atan lahum lā yashūbūnahā bi-shay'in ākharin thalāthata anfusin: Mālik, wa l-Thawrī, wa Shu'ba; *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 40. The other five scholars of the fourth generation are al-Awzā'i, Ḥammād b. Salama, al-Layth b. Sa'd, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Ibn 'Uyayna. Note that this opinion contradicts Dickinson's just-cited accusation that Mālik, al-Thawrī, and Shu'ba were "imagined" critics in the mind of Ibn Abī Ḥatīm and is a useful piece of evidence in support of the traditional narrative of the origins of Sunnī *ḥadīth* criticism.

²⁵ illā anna min aktharihim tanqīran 'an sha'ni l-muḥaddithīn wa atrakihim lil-ḥuḍūrāt wa l-matrūkīn ḥattā ja'alū hādha l-sha'na sinā'atan lahum lam yata'addawhā ilā ghayrihā ma'a luzūmi l-dīni wa l-wara'i l-shadīdi wa l-naḥqati fi l-sunan rajulān: Yahyā ibn Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān wa 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥdī; *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 52. The other three critics of this generation are Ibn al-Mubārak, Wakī', and al-Shāfi'.

²⁶ thumma akhadhū 'an ha'ulā'i maslaka l-ḥadīthi wa l-ikhtibārī wa l-intiqā'i fi l-āthārī ḥattā raḥalū fi jam'i l-sunan ilā l-amṣārī wa fattashū l-muduna wa l-aḥqāra wa aṭlaqū 'alā l-matrūkīn al-jarḥa wa 'alā l-ḥuḍūrāt l-qadhā wa bayyanū kayfiyyata aḥwālī l-thiqātī wa l-mudallisīn wa l-a'immati wa l-matrūkīn ḥattā sārū yuḡladā bi-him fi l-āthārī wa a'immatun yuslaku maslakuhum fi l-akhbārī jamā'atun minhum (seven names) . . . illā anna min aurā'i-him fi l-dīni wa aktharihim tafṭīshan 'alā l-matrūkīn wa alzamihim li-hādhihi l-sinā'ati 'alā dā'imī l-awqāti minhum kāna Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Yahyā ibn Ma'īn, wa 'Alī ibn al-Madīnī; *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 54. The remaining four critics are Abū Khaythama Zuhayr b. Ḥarb, 'Ubayd b. 'Umar al-Qawārīrī, Ibn Abī Shayba, and Ibn Rāhawayh.

²⁷ The six critics of the last generation are 'Abdullāh al-Dārimī, Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, Muḥammad al-Dhuhli, and Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī; *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 57.

of *al-Kāmil fi ḥuḍūrāt al-rijāl*. Ibn 'Adī states at the end of his seventy-three man list that

I have mentioned the names of those scholars among the Companions, Successors, and the following men, generation by generation to our day, who, in their own right, are allowed to give opinions concerning [*ḥadīth*] transmitters or who assert themselves to be qualified to do this and who memorize the [names of the] reliable and unreliable transmitters.²⁸

Only seven of the seventy-three scholars receive substantial entries from Ibn 'Adī: al-Zuhrī, Ayyūb al-Sakhtīyānī, and al-A'mash among the *tābi'ūn*; Shu'ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī in the following generation; and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī and al-Shāfi'ī in the fourth one.²⁹ Twenty-four of the names of scholars who died after 120/738 are found exclusively in Ibn 'Adī's *ṭabaqāt* presentation, an observation that suggests a rather loose standard for inclusion on the part of the author.

IV.3 Analysis: Three periods and seven generations of Sunnī ḥadīth critics

The ninety-two names generated by these ten sources that have just been introduced can be arranged easily into three chronological periods and a tripartite hierarchy. The first period extends from 100–200 AH (718–815), the second one from 200–300 (815–912), and the final one from 300–400 (912–1009).³⁰ The second and third periods of critics are identical to the third and fourth phases that I articulated in the previous chapter, while the first period of critics includes the senior members of the first phase along with the entire second phase. The hierarchy of critics is based upon the frequency by which names are mentioned among the sources, although it is important to note that only al-Dhahabī's list in *Mizān al-ītidāl* includes

²⁸ qad dhakartu asāmiya man istajāza li-naḥsihi l-kalāma fi l-rijālī min al-ṣaḥāba wa l-tābi'īn wa man ba'dahum ṭabaqatan ṭabaqatan, ilā yawminā hādha aw man naṣaba naḥsahu li-dhālika wa ḥuḍūza 'anhu min al-thiqāt wa l-dī'āf; *al-Kāmil fi ḥuḍūrāt al-rijāl*, I, 147.

²⁹ Note that seven of these seventy-three scholars are *ṣaḥāba* and twenty-two are *tābi'ūn*.

³⁰ I have selected 120/738 as a cut-off death date for this analysis in order to exclude the numerous *ṣaḥāba* and *tābi'ūn* who are recorded in the *ṭabaqāt* presentations of Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn 'Adī and are probably included because of the nature of the *ṭabaqāt* structure and not for their roles in the 'craft' of *ḥadīth* criticism.

at least one scholar in all three periods.³¹ The following tables clarify the primary and secondary critics of the three periods of *ḥadīth* criticism gleaned from these ten sources.³²

Table 4.1: Primary Critics

Period 1 (100–200/718–815)

Name	Death Date	Location	Sources
al-Awzā'ī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Amr	157/774	Syria, Beirut	All but Muslim
Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj	160/776	Basra	All seven
Sufyān b. Sa'īd al-Thawrī	161/778	Kufa	All but Muslim
Mālik b. Anas	179/795	Medina	All seven
'Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak	181/797	Khurasan	All but Muslim
Sufyān b. 'Uyayna	198/813	Mecca	All but al-Ḥākim
Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ	197/813	Kufa	All but M and HA
'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī	198/814	Basra	All but al-Ḥākim
Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān	198/813	Basra	All seven ³³

Period 2 (200–300/815–912)

Yahyā b. Ma'īn	233/848	Baghdad	All but al-Mizzī
'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Madīnī	234/849	Basra	All but al-Mizzī
Ibn Ḥanbal, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	241/855	Baghdad	All but al-Mizzī

³¹ Seven sources include multiple scholars in the first period: the lists of Ibn al-Madīnī (IM), Muslim (M), al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (KH), al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī (HA) and the *ṭabaqāt* presentations of Ibn Abī Ḥātim (IAH), Ibn Ḥibbān (IH), and Ibn 'Adī (IA). Al-Dhahabī's list in the *Mizān* only includes one first-period name (Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān). The second period is covered by KH, Ibn al-Jawzī (IJ), al-Mizzī (MI), al-Dhahabī (DH), and the three *ṭabaqāt* presentations. The third period is covered only by IJ, MI, and DH.

³² Tables for the 'other' critics who are mentioned in only one of the ten sources can be found below in the Appendix A.

³³ Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān is also the first name mentioned in al-Dhahabī's list in *Mizān al-ʿiḍāl*.

Table 4.1. (cont.)

Name	Death Date	Location	Sources
al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl	256/870	Bukhara	IH, IA, IJ, DH
Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Karīm	264/878	Rayy	All but KH and MI
Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, Muḥammad b. Idrīs	277/890	Rayy	IAH, IA, IJ, DH

Period 3 (300–400/912–1009)

Ibn Abī Ḥātim, 'Abd al-Raḥman	327/939	Rayy	All three
Ibn 'Adī, Abū Aḥmad 'Abdullāh	365/976	Jurjān	All three

Table 4.2: Secondary Critics

Period 1 (100–200/718–815)

Name	Death Date	Location	Sources
al-Zuhri, Muḥammad b. Muslim	124/742	Medina, Syria	IM, IH, IA
al-A'mash, Sulaymān b. Mihrān	148/765	Kufa	IM, IA
Ibn Jurayj, 'Abd al-Mālik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz	150/767	Mecca	IM, HA
Ḥammād b. Salama	167/784	Basra	IM, IH
al-Layth b. Sa'd	175/791	Egypt	IH, KH
Ḥammād b. Zayd	179/795	Basra	IAH, IH, KH
Hushaym b. Bashīr	183/799	Wāsiṭ	IM, IA
al-Shāfi'ī, Muḥammad b. Idrīs	204/820	Egypt	IH, IA
Abū Mushir 'Abd al-A'lā b. Mushir	218/833	Damascus	IAH, IA

Period 2 (200–300/815–912)

Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. Numayr	234/848	Kufa	IAH, IA
Abū Khaythama Zuhayr b. Ḥarb	234/848	Nasā, Baghdad	IH, DH
Ibn Abī Shayba, Abū Bakr 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad	235/849	Kufa, Wāsiṭ	IH, IA

Table 4.2. (cont.)

Name	Death Date	Location	Sources
Ibn Rāhawayh, Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm	238/853	Nishapur	IH, IA
al-Fallās, Abū Ḥaṣṣ 'Amr b. 'Alī	249/863	Basra, Baghdad	IA, IJ
Ibrāhīm b. Ya'qūb al-Jūzajānī	259/873	Syria	IJ, DH
Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj	261/874	Nishapur	IH, IJ, DH
al-Nasā'ī, Aḥmad b. Shu'ayb	303/915	Egypt	IA, DH
Period 3 (300–400/912–1009)			
al-'Uqaylī, Muḥammad b. 'Amr	322/934	Ḥijāz	IJ, DH
Ibn Ḥibbān, Abū Ḥātim Muḥammad	354/965	Khurasan	MI, DH
al-Azdī, Abū l-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn	374/984–5	Jazīra	IJ, DH
al-Dāraquṭnī, 'Alī b. 'Umar	385/995	Baghdad	IJ, DH
al-Ḥākim, Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Naysābūrī	405/1014	Nishapur	MI, DH

There are a few important findings in this sea of names that merit discussion prior to the re-articulation of these three periods into a seven-*ṭabaqāt* framework. The first observation is the extraordinary dominance of Iraqi scholars in general, and Baghdādī ones in particular, in the first two periods of *ḥadīth* criticism, a finding not entirely unexpected given my appellation of the fourth phase of *ḥadīth* compilation as the "The Triumph of Baghdad and Iran."³⁴ A second point is that all five of Muslim's 'Imāms' are primary critics, and all but one of Ibn Abī Ḥātim's "master *ḥadīth* critics" are either primary or secondary critics.³⁵ A final general observation is the fact that only eighteen of the ninety-two scholars are also included in al-Dhahabī's list of fifty-four Shuyūkh al-Islam that was discussed in the second chapter, a finding that reinforces my hypothesis that acumen with regard to *ḥadīth* criticism was only one of several of al-

³⁴ Forty-three of the critics of the first two periods hail from Iraq, seventeen of whom lived in Baghdad.

³⁵ The one critic who is unique to Ibn Abī Ḥātim's tastes is Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī.

Dhahabī's criteria for inclusion in his list of elite Sunnī scholars in *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*.

The second level of analysis of the critics identified by the ten sources is to convert the unwieldy tables on the previous pages into a crisp presentation of the most important *ḥadīth* critics. This task will be accomplished by dividing each of the three periods into multiple generations of scholars in order to clarify the historical development of this discipline. Finally, all geographical and necrological details shall be eschewed in order to provide an unobstructed view of the individual master critics in their historical context.

Table 4.3: The master Sunnī *ḥadīth* critics: A *ṭabaqāt* approach

Period 1 (100–200 AH)	
<i>Ṭabaqa 1</i>	
Secondary Critics: al-Zuhrī, al-A'mash	
<i>Ṭabaqa 2</i>	
Primary Critics:	al-Awzā'ī, Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, Ibn 'Uyayna
Secondary Critics:	Ibn Jurayj, Ḥammād b. Salama, al-Layth b. Sa'd, Ḥammād b. Zayd, Hushaym b. Bashīr
<i>Ṭabaqa 3</i>	
Primary Critics:	Ibn al-Mubārak, Wakī', Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Mahdī
Secondary Critics:	al-Shāfi'ī, Abū Mushīr 'Abd al-A'lā b. Mushīr
Period 2 (200–300 AH)	
<i>Ṭabaqa 4</i>	
Primary Critics:	Ibn Ma'in, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Ibn Ḥanbal
Secondary Critics:	Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. Numayr, Abū Khaythma, Ibn Abī Shayba, Ibn Rāhawayh, Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Fallās
<i>Ṭabaqa 5</i>	
Primary Critics:	al-Bukhārī, Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī
Secondary Critics:	Ibrāhīm al-Jūzajānī, Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, al-Nasā'ī
Period 3 (300–400 AH)	
<i>Ṭabaqa 6</i>	
Primary Critics:	Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Adī
Secondary Critics:	al-'Uqaylī, Ibn Ḥibbān
<i>Ṭabaqa 7</i>	
Secondary Critics:	Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Azdī, al-Dāraquṭnī, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī

This clear presentation of the historical development of Sunnī *ḥadīth* criticism and identification of the most profound critics merits a few more general observations. First, it is noteworthy that the first and seventh generations consist solely of 'secondary critics', while the middle five all contain a more or less equal number of primary and secondary ones. Secondly, the fact that no generation has more than five primary critics is indicative of the highest degree of authority vested in a strikingly small and geographically diverse coterie of master *ḥadīth* scholars. Finally, there can be little skepticism concerning the role of any of the primary critics or most of the secondary critics in the second and third periods of Sunnī *ḥadīth* criticism given the textual evidence that has survived. This evidence includes the five published recensions of Ibn Maʿīn's *Tārīkh*, several volumes of Ibn Ḥanbal's *ʿUḥd*, and al-Bukhārī's *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*.³⁶ Indeed, it is not a coincidence that half of the ten sources consulted for this chapter come from the pens of scholars found in the second and third periods of this list.

The obvious problem that remains, however, is that of the first period. I have alluded previously to Eerik Dickinson's recent argument that the scholars whom I have identified as primary critics in the second generation were misleadingly depicted as critics by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in order to give later *ḥadīth* critics a greater veneer of authenticity. Put succinctly, Dickinson asks the question "were famous jurists like al-Awzāʿī and Mālik b. Anas really *ḥadīth* critics?" Certainly the evidence provided by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in the *Taqdīm* is thin, especially in contrast with the substantial evidence he offers in his discussions of Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj. The only way to answer this question is to examine the depictions of the nine 'primary critics' of the second and third *ṭabaqāt* in several early books of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism in order to elucidate why so many later generations of critics considered these scholars as the Imāms and founders of this discipline.³⁷

³⁶ I mentioned in the first footnote of the first chapter that the authenticity of *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr* was championed recently by Christopher Melchert; see his article "Bukhārī and Early Hadith Criticism."

³⁷ This chapter is not the place to assess the critical roles, if any, of the ten sec-

IV.4 *The origins of Sunnī ḥadīth criticism: An examination of the first two generations of primary critics*

IV.4.1

The goal of this section is connected intimately to the fundamental task of this book, namely the elucidation of the emergence of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century. I argued in the introduction of this project that several major *ḥadīth* scholars in general, and Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Saʿd in particular, played a major role in this endeavor. The fact that both Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Maʿīn are primary critics of the fourth generation is of course beneficial to my argument but it is necessary to understand the 'state of the field' of *ḥadīth* criticism that they inherited from their teachers, such as Wakīf b. al-Jarrāḥ, Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān, and Ibn Maḥdī, in order to evaluate their own roles in its development. Since it appears that *ḥadīth* criticism began only with the generation prior to the teachers of Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Maʿīn, an analysis of the nine scholars whom I have just recognized as 'primary critics' of Period 1 seems to be a necessary step in order to sharpen our understanding of the origins of the discipline that I am arguing shaped the articulation of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century.

There are a few features common to all nine of these men that deserve serious attention prior to the evaluation of their statuses as master *ḥadīth* critics. The most salient feature of all of the first generation members of this group is an extremely high reputation for the transmission of *ḥadīth* from one, two, or three major scholars of the previous generation, collectively known as the *ṭābiʿūn*. Al-Awzāʿī is famous for his transformation of the knowledge of Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr (d. 132/749) into books, in addition to his limited transmission of *ḥadīth* from al-Zuhri.³⁸ Shuʿba had an outstanding reputation

ondary critics of the first period for the simple reason that the vast majority of these men are present in only two of the seven sources that covered the first period, whereas all but one of the primary critics was recognized by six of them. This gap indicates a high degree of consensus among the later Muslim scholars as to the identities of the most authoritative critics of the first two generations and so it is most urgent for us to assess whether this consensus is a result of a collective fraud, as Dickinson suggests, or due to the fact that these men may actually have been *ḥadīth* critics.

³⁸ *Taqdīm*, 184; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 99–100.

for the transmission of material from Qatāda b. Di'āma, al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba (d. 115/733),³⁹ and Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī.⁴⁰ Sufyān al-Thawrī was widely acknowledged as an even stronger authority than Shu'ba on the *ḥadīth* of Abū Ishāq and al-A'mash.⁴¹ Mālik's transmission of al-Zuhrī received the highest accolades, and he is depicted in the sources as the inheritor of both Nāfi' *mawlā* Ibn 'Umar's (d. 117/735) erudition and teaching circle (*ḥalqa*).⁴² Finally, Ibn 'Uyayna was the most prolific collector of *ḥadīth* from 'Amr b. Dīnār (d. 126/744), and was held in high regard for his transmission of material from al-Zuhrī by all save Ibn Ma'in.⁴³

³⁹ Al-Dhahabī describes al-Ḥakam as the "Shaykh of Kufa" and records Ibn Ḥanbal as calling him the most reliable scholar of Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī's transmissions; *Tadhkira*, I, 88–9. Note that the other two men, Qatāda and Abū Ishāq, are included in the first group of men "around whom the *isnād* revolves" in Ibn al-Madīnī's list that I included among the ten sources for this chapter.

⁴⁰ Shu'ba's transmission from Qatāda is praised by his students Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī and Ibn Mahdī in the *Taqdīm* (pp. 128 and 160, respectively) and by Ibn Ma'in in 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd al-Dārimī's *Tārīkh* ([Beirut, 1980], 151), while that from al-Ḥakam is praised by Ibn Ḥanbal; *Taqdīm*, 128, 161–2. Shu'ba is considered among Abū Ishāq's companions in al-Dārimī's *Tārīkh* (p. 59) and although Ibn Ma'in considers his transmission inferior to that of Sufyān al-Thawrī, both men are considered the most erudite of his students. This identical opinion of Ibn Ma'in, which is also found in the *Taqdīm*, is seconded by 'Alī b. al-Madīnī on the authority of Mu'adh b. Mu'adh, and further confirmed by Ibn Mahdī and Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī; *Taqdīm*, 162–3. See also the next footnote for more references.

⁴¹ 'Alī b. al-Madīnī declares al-Thawrī to have the most *ilm* of these two scholars as well as of the entire *madhhab* of Ibn Mas'ūd and, in another report, heard Mu'adh b. Mu'adh identify Shu'ba and al-Thawrī as the two soundest (*athbat*) students of Abū Ishāq; *Taqdīm*, 58 and 65. Abū Zur'a identifies Shu'ba, al-Thawrī, and Isrā'īl as the soundest companions of Abū Ishāq; *Taqdīm*, 66. Sufyān al-Thawrī's superior knowledge of al-A'mash's transmissions is testified to by Ibn Ḥanbal, Abū Ḥātim, and Ibn Ma'in (*Taqdīm*, 64–5); for Ibn Ma'in's opinion that al-Thawrī's transmission from al-A'mash is superior to that of Shu'ba, see also al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 51; for Ibn Ḥanbal's identical opinion, see *Taqdīm*, 64.

⁴² All three of the *ṭabaqāt* presentations I studied in the previous section include the report that Shu'ba came to Medina the year after Nāfi's death and saw Mālik sitting in his place leading the class; *Taqdīm*, 26, *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 44 and *al-Kāmil*, I, 104. Mālik's transmission from Nāfi' is also praised by Ibn Mahdī and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī includes him among his three best students; *Taqdīm*, 15–16. Ibn Ma'in is reported to have said that Mālik was the most reliable (*athbat*) companion of al-Zuhrī and that his knowledge from Nāfi' was more reliable than that of 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar and Ayyūb al-Sakhtīyānī (*Taqdīm*, 16; also al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 41 for his opinion that Mālik was preferable to Ma'mar, Yūnus, and 'Uqayl with respect to the teachings of al-Zuhrī). Mālik's precedence with respect to al-Zuhrī is also attested by 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Ḥanbal, al-Fallās, and Abū Ḥātim in the *Taqdīm*, 15–17.

⁴³ Ibn 'Uyayna was seen in his youth with 'Amr b. Dīnār by Shu'ba and Ḥammād b. Zayd; Ibn Ma'in considers him to have the largest amount of *ḥadīth* material

The salient feature of the third generation of critics in the first period is a deep attachment to these five major scholars as well as several of the secondary critics of this generation. Ibn al-Mubārak studied with Sufyān al-Thawrī and two anecdotes record his deep admiration for his teacher.⁴⁴ The Kufan Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ is considered to be one of the most reliable disciples of Sufyān al-Thawrī and numerous anecdotes testify to both Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal's deep respect for him.⁴⁵ Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān spent twenty years with Shu'ba and was a major student of Sufyān al-Thawrī.⁴⁶ He receives the highest accolades from Ibn Ḥanbal and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, and is praised by al-Bukhārī as the scholar with the best skills of distinguishing Sufyān al-Thawrī's *ṣaḥīḥ ḥadīth* from his *tadlīs*.⁴⁷ Finally, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī excelled in the transmission of knowledge from Mālik b. Anas and Ḥammād b. Zayd, and was considered a significant student of both Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shu'ba.⁴⁸

from him; *Taqdīm*, 33–4, and 36; *al-Kāmil*, I, 107; see also al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 55–6 for Ibn Ma'in's opinion that he had more knowledge from 'Amr than either al-Thawrī or Ḥammād b. Zayd. Abū Ḥātim remarked that Ibn 'Uyayna had more knowledge from 'Amr than Shu'ba, but disagreed with Ibn al-Madīnī's claim that Ibn 'Uyayna was the most accurate (*atqan*) of al-Zuhrī's students; this distinction he reserved for Mālik; *Taqdīm*, 52. Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān is reported to have preferred Ibn 'Uyayna to Ma'mar with respect to al-Zuhrī's transmissions, although Ibn Ma'in felt that Ma'mar was superior because Ibn 'Uyayna was a mere youth (*ghulayyīm*) when he studied with al-Zuhrī; *Taqdīm*, 51 (Qaṭṭān) and al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 41–2 (Ibn Ma'in).

⁴⁴ "Al-Thawrī has the most erudition (*ilm*) on earth" (*Taqdīm*, 57); "I wrote from 1,100 *shuyūkh*, none of them was like al-Thawrī;" Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 95.

⁴⁵ See *Taqdīm*, 219 and Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 117. Ibn Ma'in said that Wakī' was better than Ibn Mahdī with respect to the material of al-Thawrī; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 61 and Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 117. Ibn Ḥanbal is reported to have said that Wakī' had a bigger heart (or mind?) than Ibn Mahdī (*akbar fi l-qalb*) and that nobody in Kufa was like Wakī' and Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth (d. 194/810); Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 117 and *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 57, respectively.

⁴⁶ For the report that Yahyā spent twenty years with Shu'ba, see *Taqdīm*, 249. 'Alī b. al-Madīnī told Abū Ḥātim that the most reliable (*awthaq*) companion of al-Thawrī was Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān; *Taqdīm*, 247. Ibn Ma'in states that al-Qaṭṭān is superior to Ibn Mahdī with regard to the knowledge of Sufyān al-Thawrī; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 61.

⁴⁷ Ibn Ḥanbal states that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān was more reliable (*thabt*) than Wakī', Ibn Mahdī, Yazīd b. Hārūn, Abu Nu'aym (al-Faql b. Dukayn) and that he had never seen anyone more reliable than him; *Taqdīm*, 246. Abū Ḥātim said that if there is a discrepancy between the *ḥadīth* of Ibn al-Mubārak, Ibn 'Uyayna and Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, one should follow Yahyā's version; *Taqdīm*, 234. For al-Bukhārī's quote, see Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 111.

⁴⁸ Ibn Ḥanbal remarks that Ibn Mahdī was a more accurate transmitter from al-Thawrī than Wakī', and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī states that Ibn Mahdī and al-Qaṭṭān

His list of "four Imāms" is reproduced numerous times in all three *ṭabaqāt* presentations studied in this chapter, and comprises al-Awzā'ī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik b. Anas, and Ḥammād b. Zayd.⁴⁹

The second major quality shared by most of these nine master scholars is a high degree of proficiency in a discipline other than mere *ḥadīth* compilation. Al-Awzā'ī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Mālik all became eponyms for schools of jurisprudence and were among the earliest compilers of legal texts.⁵⁰ Ibn al-Mubārak, who is reported to have been the 'jurist of the Arabs' after Sufyān al-Thawrī,⁵¹ excelled in traveling to study with an unprecedented number of scholars, and literally wrote the book on Sunnī ascetism (*zuhd*). Ibn 'Uyayna is reported by al-Shāfi'ī, Ibn Wahb (d. 179/795)⁵² and Nu'aym b. Ḥammād (d. 228/843) to have had a remarkable degree of erudition with regard to Qur'ānic exegesis.⁵³ As for Shu'ba, Ibn Mahdī, and Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, their specialty seems to have been *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism (*al-jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*), and a couple of anecdotes in Ibn 'Adī's book indicate the innovative nature of Shu'ba's practice of including negative comments of transmitters in the course of his

classes (*majlis*).⁵⁴ The only special quality of Wakī' that I have come across is that he inherited the prestigious teaching post pillar in the main mosque of Kufa which had been the place of unbroken instruction from the time of 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd to his own teacher Sufyān al-Thawrī.⁵⁵

The third major feature shared by these nine men is the frequent appellation of the sobriquet 'Imām.' The lists of Muslim and al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī, and the *ṭabaqāt* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Ḥibbān, and Ibn 'Adī all refer to these men as Imāms, and I just mentioned the oft-cited report of Ibn Mahdī's 'four Imāms.' What exactly does this term mean? We have already seen that Muslim sheds a little light on this topic by indicating that his five exemplary Imāms are men "who criticize the transmission of *ḥadīth* from unsatisfactory people." The most explicit definition of this term occurs twice in Ibn 'Adī's *al-Kāmil fī du'afā' al-rijāl* and is attributed to the primary critic Ibn Mahdī:

An Imām is one who does *not* transmit all that he has heard, nor transmits from all whom he has heard, nor transmits all the questions he has been asked, nor transmits to all who ask him.⁵⁶

This rather vague definition of Imām describes a scholar who is both selective in his transmission of *ḥadīth* and his choice of students, and is considered an authority to whom questions are addressed by his contemporaries. It appears as though a closer examination of the

were the most reliable (*awṭhaq*) students of al-Thawrī; *Taqdīm*, 253. Abū Ḥātim declares Ibn Mahdī to be the most reliable (*ṭhabī*) companion of Ḥammād b. Zayd and there is a rather surprising report that Ibn 'Uyayna took reports on the authority of his contemporary Mālik b. Anas from his own young pupil Ibn Mahdī; *Taqdīm*, 255 and 257. Al-Zurqānī mentions that a group of scholars claim that Ibn Mahdī had a recension of Mālik's *Muwatta'* and that Ibn Ḥanbal incorporated much of this version of the *Muwatta'* in his *Musnad*; Zurqānī, *Sharḥ al-Zurqānī 'alā Muwatta' al-Imām Mālik*, I, 9 and 11. Note that Ibn Mahdī studied with Shu'ba for ten years, but that something happened to his notebooks and he lost a third of his materials; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 120.

⁴⁹ *Taqdīm*, 11, 118, 177, 203, 245 (Ibn al-Mubārak is substituted for al-Awzā'ī in this version); *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 44; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 80, 100. See also al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-saḥīḥ*, V, 750.

⁵⁰ Al-Awzā'ī is reported by 'Abd al-Razzāq to have been among the first to compile a book (*taṣnīf*), namely the notebooks of Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr (*Taqdīm*, 185; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 100); Sufyān al-Thawrī's *Jāmi'* is the first work listed in Ibn Nadīm's *Fihrist* under the chapter of the *madhhab* of *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*; and Mālik's *Muwatta'* remains one of the most venerated Sunnī books to this day. It is interesting to note that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān is said to have followed the *madhhab* of al-Thawrī/Ibn Mas'ūd, while his Basran contemporary Ibn Mahdī followed the *madhhab* of Mālik/Ibn 'Umar; *Taqdīm*, 234 and 252.

⁵¹ Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 115. The quote comes from al-Mu'tamir b. Sulaymān al-Taymī (d. 187/803).

⁵² Al-Dhahabī calls 'Abdullāh b. Wahb b. Muslim al-Miṣrī an Imām and jurist; *Tadhkira*, I, 222-3.

⁵³ *Taqdīm*, 32.

⁵⁴ Hushaym b. Bashīr and Yazīd b. Hārūn are reported to have left Shu'ba's *majlis* because he "introduced slander into it;" Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 82.

⁵⁵ Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 137. The list of notables who sat at this pillar is as follows: Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/652-3), 'Alqama b. Qays (d. 62/681), Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī (d. 95/714), Maṣnūr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 132/750), Sufyān al-Thawrī, Wakī'. This prestigious position was then passed on to Wakī's pupil and 'secondary critic' Ibn Abī Shayba; *Siyar*, XI, 124. Note that Wakī' also composed a *muṣannaf*, which was available in Baghdad in Ibn Sa'd's day; see below, VIII.6, note 181.

⁵⁶ *wa laysa bi-imāmin man ḥaddatha bi-kulli mā samī'a wa ḥaddatha 'an kulli man laqiya wa ḥaddatha bi-kulli mā yus'alu 'anhu wa ḥaddatha kulla man yas'aluhu*; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 100, 119. The second variant adds the following sentence: "He writes *ḥadīth* of the Prophet ﷺ that he finds from reliable (*ṭhiqa*) transmitters, then the reports of the Companions from reliable transmitters, then that of the *ṭābi'ūn*, and then he stops;" *ibid*, 119. A variant of this statement is found in a much earlier source, namely the introduction to Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*: *lā yakūnu l-rajulu imāman yuqtadā bihi ḥattā yunsika 'an ba'di mā samī'a*; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 69. Note also the opinion attributed by Ibn Wahb to Mālik found on the same page of Muslim's introduction: *'alam annahu laysa yaslimu rajulun ḥaddatha bi-kulli mā samī'a wa lā yakūnu imāman abadan wa huwa yuḥaddithu bi-kulli mā samī'a*.

nine first period primary critics is a necessary undertaking if we are to assess accurately whether these men are truly critics rather than mere transmitters of *ḥadīth*.

IV.4.2 *al-Awzā'ī*

The evidence for al-Awzā'ī's role in *ḥadīth* criticism is particularly thin.⁵⁷ In fact, he does not even appear to have been a particularly strong transmitter of *ḥadīth*, as al-Fallās remarks that he was reliable (*ṭabṭ*) only with what he heard directly from a teacher and Abū Ḥātim calls him a "jurist who follows that which he has heard."⁵⁸ I have already mentioned his key role in compiling multi-topic books and Ibn Ḥanbal calls him an Imām of the companions of Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr.⁵⁹ Al-Awzā'ī's purported favorite students of al-Zuhri baffled Ibn Abī Ḥātim, who suggests that the Syrian scholar did not have access to the more famous works of Ma'mar, Yūnus, and 'Uqayl.⁶⁰ Ibn 'Adī reports that al-Awzā'ī taught that al-Zuhri would use the expression *surīqa* whenever he encountered a *ḥadīth* with which he was unfamiliar.⁶¹ Al-Bukhārī refers to his opinions only once in his *Kitāb al-du'afā' al-saghīr*, and there do not appear to be any references to his critical opinions in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.⁶² Finally, Ibn Mahdī's appellation of al-Awzā'ī as "Imām of the Sunna" suggests that he considered his teacher to be more a model of Islamic practice than a master of *ḥadīth*.⁶³

⁵⁷ Anke Bouzenita has found references in the *Tārikhs* of Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī and Ibn 'Asākir to al-Awzā'ī's employment of the technical terms *ṭhiqa* and *ḍa'if* in her recent study *'Abd al-Rahmān al-Awzā'ī—ein Rechtsgelehrter des 2. Jahrhunderts d. H. und sein Beitrag zu den Siyar*, 54–55. It is striking that al-Awzā'ī's remarks of this type do not appear in the early critical books outside of Syria, although it is possible that a few critical comments of his are buried somewhere in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*.

⁵⁸ *Taqdima*, 185 (al-Fallās); *faqīh muttabi' li-mā samī'a*, 186 (Abū Ḥātim).

⁵⁹ Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 99–100.

⁶⁰ These students include Qurra b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, Muḥammad b. Walīd al-Zubaydī, and the books of Walīd b. Mazyad; *Taqdima*, 205.

⁶¹ Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 70.

⁶² Al-Bukhārī, *Kitāb al-du'afā' al-saghīr*, ed. Būrān al-Ḍanāwī (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1984), 74.

⁶³ *Taqdima*, 203. Note that Ibn Mahdī is reported as having identified three types of Imāms: 1) Imām of *sunna* and *ḥadīth*; 2) Imām of *sunna* but not *ḥadīth*; 3) Imām of *ḥadīth*, but not *sunna*; *Taqdima*, 118. Al-Awzā'ī appears to belong to the second category.

IV.4.3 *Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj*

In stark contrast to al-Awzā'ī, the evidence in support of Shu'ba's role in both *ḥadīth* criticism and *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism is overwhelming. His entry is by far the largest in all three of the *ṭabaqāt* presentations, and I shall analyze his 139 critical opinions arranged alphabetically by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in the *Taqdima* below. Ibn Sa'd includes several dozen reports on the authority of Shu'ba, several of which indicate a concern with whether a *tābi'ī* really heard *ḥadīth* from specific *ṣaḥāba*, and a few in which he declares a transmitter weak.⁶⁴ Al-Bukhārī also includes a very modest number of opinions ascribed to Shu'ba in *al-Du'afā' al-saghīr*.⁶⁵ Ibn 'Adī reports that al-A'mash would ask Shu'ba about the *ḥadīth* of Qatāda during his visits to Kufa and that he criticized Shu'ba for teaching *ḥadīth* to the masses by saying "Shame on you! Does one put pearls around the necks of swine?"⁶⁶ There are also several references to Shu'ba warning his students to be careful of Sufyān al-Thawrī's examples of *tadlīs*, as well as to his small party (*shū'a*) of favorite *ḥadīth* scholars.⁶⁷ Ḥammād b. Zayd's quote that "I rejected any of my *ḥadīth* that differed with those of Shu'ba (in wording)" is further testament to Shu'ba's selectivity, and there are numerous indications that Shu'ba was one of the few scholars who insisted upon hearing the same *ḥadīth* numerous times prior to teaching it to his students.⁶⁸ Finally several sources

⁶⁴ Examples of the former category include the observations that al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī did not hear from Abū Hurayra (*al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 80), while Ibn Sīrīn heard directly from Ibn 'Umar and Abū Hurayra (*ibid.*, VII, 100); that Ribī' b. Hirāsh met 'Alī but did not use the technical term *samī'a* in his transmissions (*ibid.*, VI, 421), and that Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī did not hear from 'Uthmān but did hear from 'Alī (*ibid.*, VI, 448). Examples in which Shu'ba explicitly declares a transmitter weak include the infamous case of Abū l-Zubayr al-Makkī, Yazīd b. Sufyān, and Abū Bishr; *ibid.*, V, 326, VII, 123 and 130. Concerning 'Aṭā' b. al-Sā'ib, Shu'ba remarks that he is reliable (*ṭhiqa*) when he transmits on the authority of one scholar, but not when he mentions multiple ones [in the same *isnād*]; *ibid.*, VI, p. 525.

⁶⁵ *Al-Du'afā' al-saghīr*, 71, 97, 160, 252, 253.

⁶⁶ *waylaka, yā Shu'ba! 'atū'allaqu l-lu'lu'a fī a'nāqi l-khanāzīr?* Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 76–7.

⁶⁷ For the former, see Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 82; for his four favorite scholars, see *ibid.*, I, 84. These men are al-Hakam b. 'Uṭayba, Salama b. Kuhayl, Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit, and Maṣṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir.

⁶⁸ *mā khālafanī Shu'ba fī ḥadīthin illā taraktuhu*; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 86. Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī reports Ḥammād b. Zayd as saying "if Shu'ba differs with me, I follow his [version] because I only hear [a *ḥadīth*] once, whereas Shu'ba returns to it and checks it;" *idhā khālafanī Shu'ba fī l-ḥadīth tabī'tuhu . . . inna Shu'ba kāna yasma'u wa yu'īdu*

record Shu'ba's technique for ascertaining whether Qatāda's *ḥadīth* were worth writing down or not on the basis of whether Qatāda said *ḥaddathanā* or *sami'tu* or whether he used a different verb.⁶⁹

Ibn Abī Ḥātim's collation and alphabetical organization of reports that record Shu'ba's opinions concerning ninety men warrants a closer examination because it is unique to any of the ten sources examined in this chapter and it is by far the strongest testimony to Shu'ba's pivotal role in the history of *ḥadīth* criticism.⁷⁰ Each of the 139 reports is complete with an *isnād* that consists of only three names in the overwhelming majority of the cases. Ibn Abī Ḥātim collated this material from twenty-eight sources, although the majority of it comes from only three men: his father, Muḥammad b. Yahyā,⁷¹ and Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. Fourteen of his informants transmitted only one report to him, and eight transmitted fewer than five reports. The following table provides an overview to these twenty-eight sources:

wa yubdt, wa kuntuṣanā asma'u marratan wāḥida; ibid., I, 91. See also *Taqdima*, 161 and *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*, I, 30 for similar attestations to Shu'ba's above-average strictness with respect to *sanā'*.

⁶⁹ Ibn Sa'd is the earliest source I have come across to record this statement: Shu'ba said: "I know what Qatāda heard [directly from his teachers] and what he did not: If he said *ḥaddathanā* Anas, Ḥasan, Sa'id, or Muṭarrif, [he heard from them], but if he had not heard from them, he would say *qāla* Sa'id, *qāla* Abū Qilāba;" *al-Tabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 119. Ibn Abī Ḥātim includes a report from one of his most common chains of authority in the *Taqdima*, namely Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal → 'Alī b. al-Madīnī → Ibn Mahdī, that Shu'ba wrote down *ḥadīth* when Qatāda said *ḥaddathanā* or *sami'tu*, but did not do so when he said *ḥaddatha fulān*; *Taqdima*, 160. For another slight variation in which the key word that divulges the lack of direct transmission is *ḥuddithlu* (also on the authority of Ibn Mahdī), see Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 81.

⁷⁰ These opinions are found in *Taqdima*, 132–57.

⁷¹ Rif'at Fawzī identifies two teachers of Ibn Abī Ḥātim named Muḥammad b. Yahyā in his study *Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī wa atharūh fi 'ulūm al-ḥadīth* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1994), 367. The more likely of these two men is Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. 'Umar al-Wāsiṭī who settled in Baghdad: Ibn Abī Ḥātim is quoted as saying "I wrote from him with my father" and he evaluates him as *ṣāliḥ, ṣadūq fi l-ḥadīth*. The other scholar is Muḥammad b. Yahyā b. Muḥammad al-Ḥarrānī who "wrote to us a little *ḥadīth*" (*kataba ilaynā bi-shay'in min al-ḥadīth*). It is also possible that this Muḥammad b. Yahyā is none other than the famous Shaykh al-Islām of Nishapur al-Dhuhli, although Ibn Abī Ḥātim is not normally identified as one of his pupils.

Table 4.4: Ibn Abī Ḥātim's sources for Shu'ba's critical opinions

Number	Name	Number of reports	Special features
1	Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī	47	
2	Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	20	All from 'Alī b. al-Madīnī
3	Muḥammad b. Yahyā	19	
4	'Alī b. al-Ḥasan al-Hasnājānī	10	Half from Ibn Ḥanbal
5	Ibn Abī Khaythama	5	Three from Ibn Ma'in
6	Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm	5	All from 'Amr b. 'Alī al-Fallās
7	Bishr b. Muslim al-Ḥimṣī	4	All from Baqiyya b. al-Walīd
8	Aḥmad b. Salama al-Naysābūrī	3	
9	Muḥammad b. Sa'id al-Muqrī	3	
10	Abū Sa'id al-Ashajj	2	Both from Ibn Idrīs
11	Ismā'il b. Abī l-Ḥārith	2	Both from Ibn Ḥanbal
12	Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Rajā'	2	Both from Ibn Rāhawayh
13	Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan/al-Ḥusayn b. Ishkāb	2	Both from Qurād
14	Yūnus b. Ḥabīb	2	Both from Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī (no intermediary) from Ibn Ma'in
15	'Abbās al-Dūrī	1	
16	'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	1	
17	Abū 'Alī b. Daysam al-'Askarī	1	
18	Abū Zur'a al-Dimashqī	1	
19	Aḥmad b. Maṣṣūr al-Ramādī	1	
20	Aḥmad b. Sinān	1	
21	Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī	1	
22	Hudba b. Khālīd	1	
23	Ḥusayn b. Ḥasan al-Rāzī	1	
24	Ibrāhīm b. Ya'qūb al-Jūzajānī	1	
25	Muḥammad b. 'Ammār al-Rāzī	1	

Table 4.4. (cont.)

Number	Name	Number of reports	Special features
26	Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Rāzī	1	
27	Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj	1	
28	ʿUmar b. Shabba	1	

It appears from this list that Ibn Abī Ḥātim followed in his father's footsteps by continuing the project of collecting critical reports attributed to Shu'ba and that he more than doubled the number of reports that he inherited. Abū Ḥātim's list was based upon the material of thirty-three informants, only eight of whom provided him with more than a single report.⁷² The forty-seven reports that Abū Ḥātim collected contained Shu'ba's critical evaluations for thirty-nine men, only four of whom receive multiple opinions.⁷³ These findings indicate that Abū Ḥātim struggled much harder than his son in his effort to collect Shu'ba's critical opinions and, paradoxically, came up with far less material if his son included all of the reports that he did in fact collect.

In contrast to Abū Ḥātim's painstaking collection of Shu'ba's critical opinions through oral communication, Ibn Abī Ḥātim clearly derived a significant amount of material from Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad's books of his teacher 'Alī b. al-Madīnī. This material is particularly valuable to Ibn Abī Ḥātim not only due to the prestige of Ibn al-Madīnī as a *ḥadīth* critic, but because a large amount of his material is derived from the two Basran primary critics Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī.⁷⁴

The third and final major informant from whom Ibn Abī Ḥātim benefited in the course of his quest to collect Shu'ba's critical opin-

⁷² These eight men are Aḥmad al-Dawraqī (4 reports), Ibn Ghaylān (2), Mujāhid b. Mūsā (2), Muqātil b. Muḥammad (3), Muslim b. Ibrāhīm (3), Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī (2), Sulaymān b. Ḥarb (2), and Suḥaym b. al-Qāsim al-Ḥarrānī (2).

⁷³ These four men are Abū Ishāq al-Ḥamdānī (3 reports), Ayyūb b. Abī Tamīm al-Sakhtīyānī (2), Ibn Ishāq (4), and Qays b. Rabī' (2).

⁷⁴ Thirteen of the twenty reports in Ṣāliḥ's transmission concerning Shu'ba trace back to Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān and four to Ibn Maḥdī. We shall see below that this *isnād* is very prominent in the sections in the *Taqdīm* devoted to Sufyān al-Thawrī, and that Ibn al-Madīnī heard over thirty critical reports directly from Ibn 'Uyayna.

ions is Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā. This scholar supplied Ibn Abī Ḥātim with nineteen reports from only seven sources, the most prominent of which is Maḥmūd b. Ghaylān (d. 239/854).⁷⁵ This collection contains one opinion of Shu'ba for seventeen scholars each and two for Qays b. Rabī'.

The purpose of this miniature exercise in source-criticism is to support the assertion that Ibn Abī Ḥātim did not merely forge the critical opinions of Shu'ba preserved in the *Taqdīm* in order to invent a *ḥadīth* critic named Shu'ba, as suggested by Dickinson. It seems safe to assume that these reports were in circulation in the early third/ninth century, half a century after the death of Shu'ba. There does not appear to have been an easily accessible book nor collection of Shu'ba's critical opinions, although Ibn Abī Ḥātim was greatly aided by the work of his father, his teacher Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā, and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī. It is also clear from the *isnād* analysis that Ibn Abī Ḥātim was keen to acquire five reports that were transmitted by the secondary critic al-Fallās from Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, as well as two reports that were transmitted by Ibn Rāhawayh from Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Rajā'. Finally, the list of scholars from whom Ibn Abī Ḥātim received only one report includes several luminaries, such as 'Abbās al-Dūrī, Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī, Ibrāhīm al-Jūzajānī, and Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj; it would have been very tempting for the unscrupulous scholar to forge additional reports of Shu'ba's opinions from any of these four men. Indeed, the fact that both Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and his son appear to have encountered such difficulty to obtain a mere 139 critical reports on the authority of Shu'ba testifies in favor of the proposition that this father-son team did not fabricate these reports. The paucity of critical opinions of Shu'ba that were accessible to as thorough a scholar as Ibn Abī Ḥātim in the late third/ninth century further suggests two possible interpretations: 1) either Shu'ba never really articulated very many critical opinions, or 2) his opinions became marginal in the wake of the extensive efforts of his successors who relied more upon their intimate

⁷⁵ Eight of the reports are on the authority of Maḥmūd b. Ghaylān, a prominent scholar from Marw who was imprisoned during the course of the *mihna*. He studied with Ibn 'Uyayna, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ, and his transmissions are found in all six of the canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books except the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd; al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, II, 47.

knowledge of the material than upon the opinions of their predecessors in the course of their evaluations.⁷⁶

When we examine the short opinions of Shu'ba that have been preserved we notice both an absence of contradictory reports with regard to an individual scholar and a consistency within his language in general. Both 'Alī b. al-Ja'd and Ibn Ma'in report that Shu'ba said that Hishām al-Dastawā'i had greater erudition concerning the material of Qatāda than himself,⁷⁷ three of Shu'ba's students give anecdotes indicating his infamous dislike of Abū l-Zubayr al-Makkī,⁷⁸ and Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī reports Shu'ba's respect for Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī by means of two different expressions.⁷⁹ Shu'ba took at least three opinions that were controversial in his day, namely his rejection of 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān's *ḥadīth* and his support for the Shī'ī Jābir al-Ju'fī and Ibn Ishāq, who was labeled by Mālik b. Anas as "an antichrist among the antichrists."⁸⁰ No less than twelve of the reports assembled by Ibn Abī Ḥātim consist of little more than Shu'ba's recommendation to a student to study with a famous teacher, often with the mere Arabic phrase *'alayka bi-*, or to avoid his *ḥadīth*.⁸¹ Finally, there are several examples of what Dickinson

⁷⁶ A striking feature of the books of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal that I analyze in the seventh chapter below is the *relatively infrequent recourse to the opinions of previous generations of ḥadīth critics* and, instead, a major reliance upon individual research on the part of the master critics. In fact, the role of the master critic starting in the generation of these three scholars appears to be analogous to that of a *muftahid* in jurisprudence, namely one in which the opinions of previous scholars tend to be of rather limited importance.

⁷⁷ *Taqdima*, 155.

⁷⁸ Suwayd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz reports that Shu'ba criticized him because he did not pray well, Hushaym reports that Shu'ba shredded his book of *ḥadīth* from Abū l-Zubayr, and Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī reports that Shu'ba said "nobody was more favorable to me prior to meeting him [than after having done so] than Abū l-Zubayr in Mecca;" *Taqdima*, 151.

⁷⁹ The expression in the first report is *sayyid al-fuqahā'* while the second one is "there is nobody like Ayyūb, Yūnus, and Ibn 'Awn;" *Taqdima*, 133.

⁸⁰ *Taqdima*, 20 (Mālik's abusive insult of Ibn Ishāq); 136 (two reports in defense of Jābir); 152 (five positive reports from four sources about Ibn Ishāq). Shu'ba purportedly "fled from" 'Abd al-Malik's *ḥadīth* because they were "too perfect" (*min ḥusnihā farrartu*); *ibid.*, 146.

⁸¹ Examples of scholars with whom Shu'ba advised students to study include 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Abdullāh, Qays b. al-Rabī', Haytham al-Ṣirāfī, Buḥayr b. Sa'd, Muḥammad b. Ziyād, Ismā'il b. Muslim al-'Abdī, Jarīr b. Ḥāzim, al-Ḥajjāj b. Arṭāt, Ibn Ishāq, and Warqā' b. 'Umar; *Taqdima*, 133–136, 140, and 150–6. Examples of those whom he told his pupils to avoid include Ḥasan b. 'Umāra and Ibrāhīm b. 'Uthmān; *ibid.*, 137 and 132.

has identified as 'comparative criticism', such as Shu'ba's opinion that 'Āṣim b. Sulaymān is favorable to Qatāda, Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān has more *ḥifẓ* than al-Ḥakam, and that Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr was preferable to al-Zuhrī.⁸²

The most striking finding with regard to this analysis of the texts of Shu'ba's transmission is the correlation between the first transmitter in the *isnād* (Shu'ba's student) and the style of the language of his comments. There are numerous colorful anecdotes in the transmissions of Shu'ba's students who never achieved much of a reputation for *ḥadīth* criticism, whereas those who were more prominent scholars or critics include some technical language. Examples of the former category include the use of the non-technical terms *sayyid* and "best of people" (*khiyār al-nās*), the remark "leave me, I do not want to vomit" with regard to Abū Bakr al-Hudhalī, the observation that the precision (*itqān*) of 'Abd al-Wārith b. Sa'īd was "clear from his backside" (*qafāhu*), and two particularly harsh anecdotes with regard to Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh.⁸³ The technical term *ṣadūq* (sincere) is found in both of the reports from Ibn 'Ulayya,⁸⁴ and the term *thiqa* (reliable) is found in a mere five reports with reference to eight men, half of whom include the men whom I identified as Shu'ba's favorite scholars earlier in this section of this chapter.⁸⁵ The students who employ the term *thiqa* in their transmission from Shu'ba include Ibn Idrīs, Jarīr (b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd), Sulaymān b. Ḥarb, and Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān. This latter scholar is also the only one who uses the expression *yuda'ifu* (he declared weak) with regard to Shu'ba, and it is shocking that *none* of the reports include an evaluation in which Shu'ba explicitly employs the term *ḍa'if* or one of its derivatives.⁸⁶ The most severe technical term with a negative valence, *taraka*

⁸² *Taqdima*, 145, 137, and 156–7, respectively. Dickinson identifies three styles of criticism, namely, absolute, comparative, and conditional in his study of the *Taqdima*; Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 93.

⁸³ These anecdotes are "Had I not been shy, I would not have prayed at his funeral" and "I would rather commit seventy major sins than transmit *ḥadīth* from Abān;" *Taqdima*, 134. For Abū Bakr al-Hudhalī, see *ibid.*, 143 (Sulmā b. 'Abdullāh) and for 'Abd al-Wārith, see *ibid.*, 146.

⁸⁴ *Taqdima*, 136 (Mahdī b. Maymūn) and 152 (Ibn Ishāq).

⁸⁵ The eight men are Jabala b. Suḥaym, Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit, al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba, Salama b. Kuhayl, Mahdī b. Maymūn, Maṣṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir, and Yazīd b. Khumayr; *Taqdima*, 136–9, 143, 153, 156.

⁸⁶ This observation is also consistent with my findings in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* and *al-Du'afā' al-ṣaghīr*, namely that the exact language that Shu'ba used to declare a

(to reject, abandon), occurs with regard to only five scholars and is found only once in the first person.⁸⁷ It is probably not a coincidence that all but one of these reports are transmitted by three special pupils of Shu'ba, namely Mu'adh b. Mu'adh, Jarir, and Yahya l-Qattān.

The evidence in support of the identification of Shu'ba b. al-Hajjāj as a *ḥadīth* critic is quite strong. The sources unanimously depict him as a master critic of *ḥadīth* and a modest body of his *ḥadīth*-transmitter opinions has survived. The bulk of these opinions is preserved in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Taqdima*, and my analysis of the *isnāds* of the 139 reports failed to produce any evidence of overt forgery on the part of the compiler. The argument for the authenticity of these opinions was augmented by my analysis of the texts themselves due to the observations that they were both consistent in the cases of multiple transmissions for a single scholar, and that only those reports passed on by students of Shu'ba who were themselves critics contained the technical terms that gained widespread currency by the early third/ninth century. While it would be desirable to know the actual language employed by Shu'ba in his negative criticisms of *ḥadīth* scholars, it is apparent from the surviving reports that his more critically minded students understood what their teacher meant and, perhaps out of respect, chose to conceal it with the unambiguous expression *yudā'ifu*.

IV.4.4 Sufyān al-Thawrī

There do not appear to have been many religious scholars in the early phases of Islam who received a higher degree of honor from their contemporaries and students than the Kufan Sufyān b. Sa'īd

transmitter weak has been concealed by the expression of *yudā'ifu*. Note also that Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh is recorded as saying that Shu'ba "did not say nice words about" 'Umāra b. Juwayn; *Taqdima*, 149. What these words were, we can only imagine.

⁸⁷ The five men whose *ḥadīth* are rejected by Shu'ba are Hasan b. 'Umāra, Hukaym b. Jubayr, Shahr b. Hawshab, 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān, and al-Minhāl b. 'Amr; *Taqdima*, 138, 139, 144, 146, 153. The first of these reports is the only example in which Shu'ba is purported to have said "I rejected him;" all of the others have the word *taraka* in the mouth of Shu'ba's students, with the exception of the two reports regarding Hukaym b. Jubayr, in which the question "Why did Shu'ba reject Hukaym?" is actually in the mouth of Ibn al-Madīnī and the question is directed to Yahyā l-Qattān.

al-Thawrī. I have mentioned already that his knowledge of the reports of Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī and al-A'mash was considered superior to that of Shu'ba, as well as two anecdotes that record Ibn al-Mubārak's praise of him. Yahyā l-Qattān was particularly devoted to him and is reported to have said that al-Thawrī was superior to Mālik in everything and that nobody had more material memorized (*ḥifẓ*) than him.⁸⁸ Ibn Mahdī boasted that al-Thawrī's unique opinion was more reliable than the consensus of four of his prominent contemporaries, a report that appears in a hyperbolic form in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Taqdima*.⁸⁹ Even the strict critic Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī was impressed with al-Thawrī's erudition:

Sufyān is a jurist, *ḥāfiẓ*, and ascetic. He is the Imām of Iraq, most perfect (*alqan*) of the companions of Abū Ishāq, and has more *ḥifẓ* than Shu'ba; if these two differ, al-Thawrī [is correct].⁹⁰

While there can be little doubt that Sufyān al-Thawrī was a remarkable *ḥadīth* scholar, his status as a *ḥadīth* critic requires a careful examination of the sources. There are not any references to him in al-Bukhārī's *al-Du'afā'* *al-ṣaghīr*, and there are only three opinions of his found in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, none of which involve the criticism of an individual transmitter.⁹¹ There is a report from 'Abd al-Razzāq that al-Thawrī would reply to inquiries about names in the *isnād* by saying "he spoke well" (*kāna ḥasan al-khiṭāb*) and another one from his Kufan student Abū Nu'aym that he would scowl (*qattab*) whenever he related *ḥadīth* from a weak transmitter.⁹² These reports

⁸⁸ *Sufyān faṣṣa Mālik fī kullī shay'*; *Taqdima*, 57, *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 51. For al-Thawrī's incomparable *ḥifẓ*, see *Taqdima*, 62–3, *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 49, and Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 97. Yahyā l-Qattān is reported to rank the three scholars with the most *ḥifẓ* as al-Thawrī, Shu'ba, and Hushaym in the first two of these sources. It is important to recall the reports we cited earlier that indicate that Yahyā l-Qattān, despite being a Basran, was a follower of the *madhhab* of Sufyān al-Thawrī.

⁸⁹ *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 51; the four scholars are Zā'ida b. Qudāma, Abū l-Aḥwās, Isrā'īl, and Sharīk. The exaggerated report is transmitted by al-Fallās and put in the mouth of Yahyā l-Qattān: "Even if there were 4000 like these [four scholars], al-Thawrī would be more reliable (*athbat*) than them!" *Taqdima*, 78–9.

⁹⁰ *Sufyān faḥḥun, ḥāfiẓun, zāhidun imāmu ahli l-'irāq, wa alqanu aṣḥābi Abī Ishāq, wa huwa aḥfazu min Shu'ba, wa idhā ikhtalafa l-Thawrī wa Shu'ba, fa-l-Thawrī*; *Taqdima*, 66.

⁹¹ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VI, 523 (*ḥadīth* of 'Abd al-A'lā b. 'Amr from Ibn al-Hanafiyya from a book, not *samā'*); VI, 528 (names of the four *ḥuffāz* in his opinion); VI, 528 (how to distinguish Jābir al-Ju'fī's *tadlīs* from his sound *ḥadīth*). Parallel versions of all three of these reports are also found in the *Taqdima*, 71, 72 (only three of the four names), and 73, respectively.

⁹² Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 93 and 99.

indicate, at best, an informal method of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and may help explain the near total absence of any negative opinions of individual scholars in these early sources.⁹³

Ibn Abī Ḥātim has distinguished himself again, as in the case of Shu'ba, with the most substantial collection of critical reports on the authority of Sufyān al-Thawrī.⁹⁴ He collated seventy-three reports from a variety of sources, the most important by far of which is Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's transmission of Ibn al-Madīnī's collection of comments from Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Mahdī.⁹⁵ All of the positive opinions are devoid of technical terms, and the negative ones are almost exclusively with respect to a faulty line of transmission and not a transmitter.⁹⁶ This former category of opinions range from calling al-Mu'āfā b. 'Imrān the "saphire of the scholars" (*yāqūt al-ʿulamāʾ*),⁹⁷ identifying Maṣṣūr, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jazarī, Ayyūb, and 'Amr b. Dīnār as "sources free from doubt,"⁹⁸ and commenting that the ever-controversial Jābir al-Ju'fī was "most pious with regard to *ḥadīth*."⁹⁹ Ibn Abī Ḥātim has even found a report in which al-Thawrī refused to write *ḥadīth* from a Murjī'ī judge in Jurjān, but decided

none-the-less to take his material from this judge's student!¹⁰⁰ Even a report concerning the reliability of Muḥammad al-Kalbī is crafted in a manner so that the word "mendacious" (*kadhib*) appears in the mouth of al-Kalbī with reference to his own transmission from Abū Ṣāliḥ on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās.¹⁰¹

There are three important findings that can be gleaned from Sufyān al-Thawrī's critical reports in the *Taqdima*. First, al-Thawrī's criticism is confined almost exclusively to defective *isnāds* instead of defective transmitters. In this sense he could perhaps be considered more of a *ḥadīth* editor than a critic.¹⁰² Secondly, while al-Thawrī is conservative with negative criticisms, he is lavish in his praise and willing, like Shu'ba, to defend a controversial scholar such as Jābir al-Ju'fī. The third, and perhaps most significant finding is that the only technical terms of *ḥadīth* criticism that appear are in the mouths of his students.¹⁰³ These findings are consistent not only with the analysis of the critical opinions of Shu'ba, but support the argument of Ibn Ḥibbān in *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn* that the second "craft" of *ḥadīth* criticism, namely *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism (*al-jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*) only began with the pupils of Sufyān al-Thawrī and his generation.¹⁰⁴

IV.4.5 Mālik b. Anas

Mālik's reputation in the eyes of later generations of Sunnī master *ḥadīth* critics revolves around his reliability in general, and his book, *al-Muwattaʿa*, in particular. Despite the earlier citation that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān universally favored Sufyān al-Thawrī to Mālik, we find that Ibn Mahdī considered Mālik to be the most sound scholar of *ḥadīth*,

⁹³ The only cases in which al-Thawrī explicitly declares an individual weak (*yūdaʿifuhū*) that I have so far come across are: 1) on the authority of Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān with regard to 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Ja'far b. 'Abdullāh al-Anṣārī and 2) that he called 'Abbād b. Kathīr a liar (*kadhhab*); see *Mawṣūʿat aḥwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 310 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 86, respectively. Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī also includes al-Thawrī's opinion of 'Abbād in his *Kitāb al-duʿafāʾ* (p. 122; #176) and this is the only negative opinion attributed to al-Thawrī among the 289 entries of his book.

⁹⁴ *Taqdima*, 69–83.

⁹⁵ Thirty-one of the reports are of this *isnād*; other sources include his father (10 reports), Muḥammad b. Yahyā (7 reports), 'Alī b. al-Ḥasan al-Hasnājānī (4 reports), and Muḥammad b. Sa'īd al-Muqrī (4 reports).

⁹⁶ Six of these reports consist of *ḥadīth* that al-Thawrī declared suspect (*ankara*) due to the fact that certain men in the *isnād* never met each other or were inaccurate; *Taqdima*, 70–1, 81–2. Note that all of these reports come from either Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān or Ibn Mahdī. The only case of al-Thawrī using the term "liar" (*kadhhab*) is with regard to 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Mujāhid; *Taqdima*, 76. Note, however, that when al-Thawrī is asked about this same scholar in another report, he merely turns his face away and does not say anything. The only other negative phrases that I have come across is "it is odd" (*ʿajaban*) that x would transmit from y" with regard to Dāwūd b. Yazīd and al-Kalbī, and the expression *nāsiyan* (forgetful) with respect to Abān b. 'Ayyāsh; *Taqdima*, 73, 77.

⁹⁷ *Taqdima*, 75.

⁹⁸ *ḥa'ulāʾi l-ʿayyūn lladhīna lā yushakku fihim*; *Taqdima*, 72–3.

⁹⁹ *kāna warīʿan fī l-ḥadīth*; *Taqdima*, 72. Another version reads: *mā ra'aytu rajulan awra'a fī l-ḥadīth min Jābir al-Ju'fī, wa lā Maṣṣūr*; *Taqdima*, 77.

¹⁰⁰ *Taqdima*, 80–1. The Murjī'ī judge's name is Jawāb al-Taymī. In another report, al-Thawrī tells Ibn al-Mubārak to study with Yazīd al-Shāmī and to beware of his Qadarī tendencies; *Taqdima*, 72.

¹⁰¹ *qāla lanā l-Kalbī: mā ḥaddathu 'an Abī Ṣāliḥ 'an Ibn 'Abbās fa-huwa kadhibun fa-lā tarwihī*; *Taqdima*, 73. This identical report is also present in al-Bukhārī, *al-Duʿafāʾ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 209.

¹⁰² Note the intriguing report transmitted by Wakīʿ that al-Thawrī edited (*kāna yuṣaḥḥihū*) the *tafsīr* of Ibn Abī Najīḥ; *Taqdima*, 79.

¹⁰³ For the expression *yuwaththiq*, see *Taqdima*, 73, 75, 81. There is one exception to this observation, namely al-Thawrī's purported use of the term *lā ba'sa bihi* with regard to Ibrāhīm b. Muḥājir, although it is possible that this expression was articulated by his student Ibn Mahdī; *Taqdima*, 74.

¹⁰⁴ See above, IV.2.2. Of course, it is quite possible that technical terms of criticism may be found attributed to Sufyān al-Thawrī in other sources, since I have only surveyed a small portion of the literature.

and that neither Ibn Ḥanbal nor Ibn Maʿīn criticized a man from whom Mālik took reports.¹⁰⁵ Both Ibn Mahdī and al-Shāfiʿī are reported as calling the *Muwattaʿa* the most sound book after the Qurʾān, and the latter jurist is reported to have said “if a ḥadīth of Mālik comes to you cling to it with all your might!”¹⁰⁶ ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī went so far as to declare that every Medinan from whom Mālik did *not* transmit ḥadīth had some sort of defect (*fi ḥadīthihi shayʿun*),¹⁰⁷ and reports that Mālik’s response to Bishr b. ʿUmar al-Zahrānī’s question about the probity of a transmitter was “Do you see him in my notebooks? Were he reliable (*thiqa*), you would have seen him [there].”¹⁰⁸

This last anecdote illustrates a unique feature of Mālik’s ḥadīth criticism, namely the employment of several technical terms that became normative for this discipline. Despite the paucity of critical reports found in Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s *Taqdima*, the term *thiqa* appears no fewer than ten times in the chapter devoted to Mālik, seven of which are in the negative (*laysa bi-thiqa*).¹⁰⁹ The technical expression *thiqa maʾmūn* is also found in a comment concerning Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī’s selectivity of ḥadīth-transmitters in *al-Kāmil fi duʿafāʾ al-rijāl*.¹¹⁰ Three other standard critical terms are present among Mālik’s opinions in the *Taqdima*,¹¹¹ as well as the unique term for which he is most particularly famous, namely “an antichrist among the antichrists” (*dajjāl min dajjila*), for Ibn Ishāq.¹¹² Ibn ʿUyayna is quoted as declaring Mālik to be the strictest of the critics with regard to transmitters

¹⁰⁵ *Taqdima*, 14 (Ibn Mahdī), 17 (Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Maʿīn; see also Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 102: “we do not mind not asking about [the reliability] of a man from whom Mālik transmits”). Note that there are also reports that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān considered Mālik to be the most sound (*aṣaḥḥu*) scholar (*ibid.*, I, 102), although Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s interpretation of *qawm* to refer to al-Thawrī and Ibn ʿUyayna in the report *mā fi l-qawmi aṣaḥḥun ḥadīthan* may be incorrect; *Taqdima*, 15.

¹⁰⁶ *idhā jāʾaka ḥadīthu Mālikin fa-ushdud bi-hi yadayka*; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 103 and *Taqdima*, 14, for a similar report. For the *Muwattaʿa* as second to the Qurʾān, see *Kutāb al-majrūhin*, I, 41–2.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 103.

¹⁰⁸ *hal raʾaytahu fi kutubī? qultu lā qāla law kāna thiqtan la-raʾaytahu*; *Taqdima*, 24; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 103. This report dates back at least to the introduction of Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*; see *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 107.

¹⁰⁹ *Taqdima*, pp. 19, 22, 24 (six examples of replies to Bishr b. ʿUmar’s questions). Five of these opinions can be found in the Introduction to Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*; see *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 107.

¹¹⁰ Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 74.

¹¹¹ These terms include *laysa bi-dhāk*, *ṣāliḥ*, and *kadhḥāb*; *Taqdima*, 19 and 21.

¹¹² *Taqdima*, 20.

(*rijāl*), and there is a report that Mālik urged his students to shun the ḥadīth from any of the following four types of people: one who is senile, a proselytizer of religious innovation (sectarianism), a liar, and “a pious Shaykh who does not understand what he is saying.”¹¹³ In conclusion, the evidence we have scrutinized in these sources not only testifies to Mālik’s status as a *bona fide* ḥadīth critic, but indicates that Mālik was one of the first scholars to engage in ḥadīth-transmitter criticism and employ its technical vocabulary.

IV.4.6 Sufyān b. ʿUyayna

If my hypothesis that ḥadīth-transmitter criticism emerged from general ḥadīth criticism during the second half of the second/eighth century is correct, then one would expect to find technical terms associated with the long-lived Meccan scholar Ibn ʿUyayna. Although Ibn ʿUyayna is not counted among the “three men who made ḥadīth criticism into a craft” according to Ibn Ḥibbān, his presence among Muslim’s five Imāms who criticized weak transmitters is significant.¹¹⁴ Ibn ʿUyayna has more opinions preserved in al-Bukhārī’s *al-Duʿafāʾ al-saghīr* than any other member of his generation, and three of them explicitly state “he declared [the transmitter] to be unreliable” (*yudʿā ifuḥu*).¹¹⁵ Ibn ʿAdī reports that Sufyān al-Thawrī asked Ibn ʿUyayna about the scholars of the Hijāz and that no scholar compiled a greater amount of material (*jamʿ*) than he.¹¹⁶ The most important early source for the preservation of Ibn ʿUyayna’s critical opinions is, not surprisingly, Ibn Abī Ḥātim’s collection of eighty-six reports in the *Taqdima*.

The critical opinions of Ibn ʿUyayna found in the *Taqdima* are of

¹¹³ *lā yuʾkhdhu l-ʿilmu min arbaʿa, wa khudhū minman siwā dhālika; lā yuʾkhdhu min saḥīhin muʿtānin bi-saḥīhi, wa in kāna arwā l-nāsi; wa lā min ṣāhibi hawan yadʿū l-nāsa ilā hawāhu; wa lā min kadhḥābin yakdhibu fi ḥadīthi l-nāsi, wa in kunta lā tattahimuhu an yakdhibu ʿalā rasūli llāhi; wa lā min shaykhin lahu ʿibādātun wa faḍlun idhā kāna lā yaʾrifu mā yuḥaddithu*; Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 103. Ibn ʿUyayna’s opinion can be found in the *Taqdima*, 23 and *al-Kāmil*, I, 102; note that the *isnāds* in both sources include ʿAlī b. al-Madīnī and Ṣāliḥ b. Aḥmad.

¹¹⁴ Muslim also cites Ibn ʿUyayna’s criticisms of the Shīʿī (*rāfiḍī*) beliefs of Jābir al-Juʿfī in the introduction of his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; see *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 92–3.

¹¹⁵ These three examples are located on pages 29, 63, 252 of *al-Duʿafāʾ al-saghīr*. The other four opinions include identifying two Qadarīs, one Ibādī, and one person as “sub-ḥāfiḥ;” *ibid.*, 134, 191, 92, and 283, respectively.

¹¹⁶ Ibn ʿAdī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 107–8.

capital significance because they include several technical terms and indicate the context in which these terms were articulated. The expression *thiqa* (reliable) occurs in eight different reports, all of which indicate that this comment was uttered by Ibn 'Uyayna immediately after he mentioned a name in the *isnād* of a particular *ḥadīth*.¹¹⁷ The term *ṣadūq* appears once and two reports contain expressions based on the term *ṣidq* (sincere).¹¹⁸ Another report includes both of these positive critical terms in the superlative form, namely "most reliable and most sincere of the people."¹¹⁹ There is a unique example of *yudā'ifuhu* in the mouth of Ibn 'Uyayna's student Nu'aym b. Ḥammād and a report on the authority of 'Alī b. al-Madīnī that Ibn 'Uyayna rejected (*taraka*) the transmissions of another scholar.¹²⁰ Another example of negative criticism is Ibn 'Uyayna's advice to his students not to listen to legal *ḥadīth* from Baqīyya b. al-Walīd, but to listen to his material pertaining to the rewards of the Hereafter and other topics.¹²¹ A final example of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, albeit a non-technical one, is the quote of Ibn 'Uyayna that "when I used to hear al-Ḥasan b. 'Umāra transmit [*ḥadīth*] on the authority of al-Zuhrī and 'Amr b. Dīnār, I would put my fingers in my ears!"¹²²

¹¹⁷ The comment "and he was reliable" (*wa kāna thiqa*), occurs almost always in the context of an *isnād* which Ibn 'Uyayna is relating for a *ḥadīth* whose *matn* is never included in the report. An example for this is *ḥaddathanā Sufyān [b. 'Uyayna] 'an al-Aḥwas ibn Ḥakīm wa kāna thiqa; Taqdima*, 41. Other examples can be found of pages 42–5 of the *Taqdima*. Only in one case does Ibn 'Uyayna repeat the word *thiqa* three times in what is clearly an effort, if authentic, to praise his beloved master-teacher 'Amr b. Dīnār; *Taqdima*, 49.

¹¹⁸ For *ṣadūq*, see *Taqdima*, 37; for *ahl al-ṣidq*, 41; and *ma'ādīn al-ṣidq*, 42.

¹¹⁹ *ḥaddathanā Ibrāhīm ibn Maysara, wa kāna aṣḍaqa l-nāsi wa awthaqahum; Taqdima*, 41.

¹²⁰ *Taqdima*, 42, 46, respectively. Note that Ibn 'Uyayna was the only scholar of his generation whom 'Alī b. al-Madīnī was able to study with directly without the intermediary of Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān or Ibn Mahdī. Twenty-one of the reports in this section of the *Taqdima* were transmitted from him through Ibn Ḥanbal's son Ṣāliḥ to Ibn Abī Ḥatīm; it is somewhat surprising that none of them include the technical term *thiqa*, although this might be due to the fact that they were specific answers to Ibn al-Madīnī's questions and we have just observed that Ibn 'Uyayna may have preferred to use the term in the course of relating *ḥadīth*.

¹²¹ *lā tasma'ū min Baqīyya mā kāna fī sunna, wa-isma'ū minhu mā kāna fī thawābīn wa ghayrihi; Taqdima*, 41. Note that this differentiation with regards to the reliability of the transmitter between legal and piety-inducing *ḥadīth* is found also in the Introduction of Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. If this report is authentic, it may be one of the earliest examples of a critic who relied upon the nature of the content of the *matn* of *ḥadīth* to determine the degree of strictness that one should apply to the *isnād*; in other words, the transmitters in the *isnād* had to be of the highest level in the cases of legal *ḥadīth*, and of a medium level with regard to non-legal reports.

¹²² *kuntu idhā sami'tu al-Ḥasan ibn 'Umāra yarwī 'an al-Zuhrī wa 'Amr ibn Dīnār ja'allu iṣba'ī fī udhunī; Taqdima*, 44.

Ibn 'Uyayna qualifies as a genuine *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic on the basis of the evidence I have subjected to analysis. He followed the lead of Shu'ba, in that he was willing to criticize transmitters instead of individual *ḥadīth*, and to employ technical terms that came into circulation on a rather limited scale in the circles of Mālik. Ibn 'Uyayna's demonstrated willingness to engage in *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism distinguishes him from his senior contemporary namesake Sufyān al-Thawrī and may explain why Muslim included the former Sufyān among his list of five Imāms instead of the arguably more illustrious Sufyān al-Thawrī.

IV.4.7 'Abdullāh b. al-Mubārak

The evidence in favor of the identification of Ibn al-Mubārak as a *ḥadīth* critic is similar to that which I presented with respect to Ibn 'Uyayna. The initial impression of Ibn al-Mubārak that one might receive from the ten primary sources of this chapter is that of a pious militant scholar who is an unlikely candidate for the appellation of critic, especially in light of the report that he "never rejected the *ḥadīth* of a man until he was informed of something that made it impossible for him to defend [the transmitter]."¹²³ Despite this caveat, it is significant to observe that al-Bukhārī mentions seven men whose *ḥadīth* Ibn al-Mubārak rejected (*taraka*) and one man whom he is reported to have declared unreliable (*yudā'ifuhu*).¹²⁴ Ibn Abī Ḥatīm also records the names of four men whose *ḥadīth* Ibn al-Mubārak was observed by his pupils to reject, as well as two reports in which the technical term *thiqa* is present.¹²⁵ Ibn al-Mubārak also states his preference for the Zuhri material transmitted by Yūnus al-Aylī for its accuracy due to the fact that it was copied directly from

¹²³ *kāna Ibn al-Mubārak lā yatrūku ḥadītha l-raḥul ḥattā yablughahu 'anhu l-shay'u lladhī lā yastatī'u an yadfa'ahu; Taqdima*, 270. The version of this report on page 274 substitutes *yafrahu* for *yatrūku*.

¹²⁴ *Al-Du'afā' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 28, 34, 38, 61, 120, 333; 65 (*yudā'ifuhu*). Three additional critical reports involving Ibn al-Mubārak can be found in this book on pages 57 (*ahlu l-Baṣra yudā'ifūna[hu]*), 73 (*nasabahu*), and 146. This last example is an anecdote that Ibn al-Mubārak was eager to hear from a scholar until he heard a suspect *ḥadīth* regarding taxation and then decided not to go and study with him. Several critical opinions of Ibn al-Mubārak are also sprinkled throughout Muslim's introduction to his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; see *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 80–2, 86, and 106.

¹²⁵ The four transmitters rejected by Ibn al-Mubārak can be found in the *Taqdima*, 271–4; the *thiqa* reports are 273–4. There are also unique reports that include the terms *ṣāliḥ* and *ṣadūq*; *ibid.*, 271, 274.

the teacher's notebooks, even though he acknowledges that the student with the largest quantity of Zuhri reports is Ma'mar.¹²⁶ Despite some initial skepticism as to whether Ibn al-Mubarak can accurately be described as a *ḥadīth* critic, our analysis of his opinions preserved by al-Bukhārī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim makes his case as strong, if not stronger, than for those of Ibn 'Uyayna and Mālik.¹²⁷

IV.4.8 *Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ*

The evidence in support of Wakī's critical capacity is congruous to that which I just extracted for Ibn al-Mubarak. There is one report in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* in which Wakī' declares Sulaymān b. Burayda to be "sounder and more reliable with regard to *ḥadīth* than his brother ('Abdullāh)" and that employs the superlative form of the technical terms *ṣaḥīḥ* and *thiqa*.¹²⁸ Al-Bukhārī reports two men whose *ḥadīth* Wakī' rejected, one whom he declared unreliable, and another individual whom he declared to be *thiqa*.¹²⁹ Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports no fewer than sixteen reports in which Wakī' employs the technical term *thiqa* as well as two of the earliest examples of the term *thabt*. The fact that several of these examples in which Wakī' evaluates a transmitter occur in the course of his recitation of the *isnād* of a *ḥadīth* is consistent with our finding with regard to the practice of Ibn 'Uyayna and suggests that this was the method by which the first *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics informed their students of the reliability of their predecessors. There are a few negative reports, including one example of *yūda'ifu* and another in which Wakī' remarks that "al-Mu'allā b. Hilāl came to us and his books were among the soundest (*aṣaḥḥi*) books; then several things became clear and we were

¹²⁶ *Taqdima*, 272. If the report that Ibn al-Mubarak called Yūnus's book "sound" (*ṣaḥīḥ*) is authentic, this might be the earliest reference to a sound book in the Islamic tradition.

¹²⁷ Al-Bukhārī's pupil al-Tirmidhī also includes a list of a dozen men whose *ḥadīth* Ibn al-Mubarak rejected; see al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, V, 740.

¹²⁸ *kāna aṣaḥḥahumā ḥadīthan wa awthaqahumā*; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 115.

¹²⁹ Al-Bukhārī, *al-Du'afā' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, 64 and 108 (*tarakahu*); 348 (*thiqa*). Wakī' is also quoted as saying that "the people say that 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Mujāhid b. Jabr did not hear anything from his father," that he "spoke cautiously" (*yatakallamu fīh*) about Yahyā b. al-'Alā' al-Rāzī, and that he declared Yamān b. al-Mughīra to have suspect (*munkar*) *ḥadīth*; *ibid.*, 156, 253, and 259.

no longer able to transmit anything on his authority."¹³⁰ The inescapable conclusion from the evidence gleaned from these three early sources is that Wakī' was a *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic in the same style as his senior contemporaries Ibn 'Uyayna and Ibn al-Mubarak, even though he seems to have been relatively reluctant to reject and swift to praise his erudite predecessors found in the *isnāds* of the *ḥadīth* which he transmitted.¹³¹

IV.4.9 *Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī*

The final primary critics of the first period, Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Maḥdī, are the two scholars whom Ibn Ḥibbān identified as the founders of the craft of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism in his *ṭabaqāt* presentation in *Kitāb al-majrūḥīn*.¹³² Their presence in many of the *isnāds* of critical reports that preserve the opinions of their teachers Shu'ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī in the *Taqdima* has been indicated throughout this chapter. Ibn 'Adī includes at the beginning of the third *ṭabaqa* in *al-Kāmil fī du'afā' al-rijāl* both Ibn Maḥdī's list of four Imāms and three reports in which Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān mentions that he asked al-Awzā'i, al-Thawrī, Ibn 'Uyayna, Shu'ba, and Mālik what one should do about the transmitter who makes errors in his *ḥadīth*.¹³³ The universal response, "clarify his state/condition" (*bayyin amrahu*), can be seen as a pseudo-legal *responsum* for the permissibility of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism from the most prominent religious scholars of the generation prior to Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān. The significance of this anecdote is not whether Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān actually asked each of these scholars for their blessing prior to criticizing many transmitters, but

¹³⁰ *ataynā l-Mu'allā ibn Hilāl wa innā kutubahu la-min aṣaḥḥi kutubin thumma zaharai ashyā'un mā naqdiru an nuḥaddīha 'anhu bi-shay'in*; *Taqdima*, 225.

¹³¹ For a particularly useful collection of Wakī's critical opinions, see the editor's introduction of the recently published edition of his *Kitāb al-zuhd*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Farīwā'i, 3 vols. in 2 (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣumay'i, 1994), 82–4.

¹³² See above, IV.2.2.

¹³³ Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 80. The first version reads: *sa'altu l-Awzā'i, wa Sufyān, wa Mālik—wa aẓunnahu qāla Shu'ba—'an al-rajulī yahimu fī l-ḥadīthi fa-qālū: bayyin, bayyin*. The second version is: *sa'altu Sufyān ibn Sa'īd wa Shu'ba wa Mālik wa Ibn 'Uyayna 'an al-rajulī yuttaḥamu aw lā yahfazū qālū jami'an: bayyin amrahu*. The third report is identical to the second, but with different *isnād*. The first version comes from the secondary critic al-Fallās, whereas the second and third ones come from the Basran 'Affān b. Muslim. A similar report is found in al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaḥīḥ*, V, 739.

rather than later critics cast him in the role of a petitioner before the most eminent religious scholars of his day and thus saw him as the champion of a new practice whose potential for causing strife (*fitna*) clearly worried many of its practitioners.¹³⁴

Ibn Mahdī is also the earliest scholar to explain how an expert of *ḥadīth* engages in criticism. He is quoted as stating that "I know the sound from the weak *ḥadīth* like a doctor can determine whether a person is insane" in all three of the *ṭabaqāt* presentations, and he employs the analogy of a coin trader in Ibn 'Adī's book.¹³⁵ This latter explanation is transmitted by 'Alī b. al-Madīnī to al-Bukhārī and includes the important argument that the means by which one becomes proficient at *ḥadīth* criticism is through "lengthy [*ḥadīth*] sessions, debates, and experience."¹³⁶ That this justification for the technique of *ḥadīth* criticism is associated with Ibn Mahdī in all three of our *ṭabaqāt* presentations is a particularly strong indication of his role as a *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic in the eyes of the third/ninth century *ḥadīth* scholars, even though relatively few of his critical comments appear to have survived.

The absence of Ibn Mahdī's critical opinions in our hitherto most fecund source for them, namely Ibn Abī Hātim's *Taqdīm*, is compensated for partially by al-Bukhārī's *al-Du'afā' al-ṣaghūr*. Ibn Mahdī's presence is a little smaller than what one might expect, as he is cited in only seven cases, a mere two of which involve actively rejecting a transmitter.¹³⁷ Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, by contrast, dominates *al-Du'afā' al-ṣaghūr*. Al-Bukhārī mentions ten men whom Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān rejects,¹³⁸ five whom he declares unreliable,¹³⁹ two from whom he does not transmit *ḥadīth*,¹⁴⁰ and another thirteen mostly negative opinions.¹⁴¹

¹³⁴ This idea is stated explicitly in the last report in this section from Abū Mushir who replied "no" to the question "Do you consider [clarifying the transmitter's condition] a type of sedition (*fitna*)?" Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 80.

¹³⁵ *kamā ya'rifu l-ṭabīb al-majnūn*; *Taqdīm*, 252; Ibn Hibbān, *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, I, 32; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 118. A more sophisticated explanation of the necessary skills for this craft from the mouth of Abū Hātim can be found in the *Taqdīm*, 249–50.

¹³⁶ *li-ṭūli l-majālisa aw al-munāzara wa l-khibra*; Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 118.

¹³⁷ Al-Bukhārī, *al-Du'afā' al-ṣaghūr*, 33, 52 (reading "Yahyā wa Ibn Mahdī" instead of "Yahyā ibn Mahdī" in the printed text), 165, 210, 232, 239, and 258.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 33, 49, 73, 152, 163, 170, 181, 231, 257.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 133, 155, 173, 232, 250.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 92, 210.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 78, 82, 115, 132, 135, 146, 154, 164, 176, 177, 220, 229, 233.

The whole gamut of technical terms that we have been watching carefully is present in the succinct remarks of both Ibn Mahdī and Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān found in al-Bukhārī's small book, and it is clear that these two men played a major role as the bridge between their teachers who were hesitant to criticize individual transmitters, at least on a large scale, and their relentlessly inquisitive pupils whose work I shall be analyzing in the second part of this study.¹⁴²

IV.5 What about al-Shāfi'ī?

Since the topic of *ḥadīth* is a constant theme in the legal writings of Muḥammad b. Ibrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820), one may have expected to find al-Shāfi'ī listed among the master *ḥadīth* critics in the ten sources that I examined. Joseph Schacht reconstructed the complexities and some of the paradoxes of al-Shāfi'ī's articulation of the elevated legal authority of *ḥadīth* over half a century ago in *Origins of Muḥammadan Jurisprudence*.¹⁴³ The paradoxes that Schacht correctly identified include: 1) al-Shāfi'ī's frequent reliance upon *ṣaḥāba* reports as evidence despite his inability to provide a theoretical reason for the intrinsic authority of anything less than a prophetic *ḥadīth*; 2) his acceptance of the *mursal ḥadīth* from senior *tābi'ūn*; and 3) his "careless" citation of *isnāds*. Schacht's observation of most interest for this chapter is that al-Shāfi'ī and his contemporaries were aware of technical terms of *ḥadīth* criticism that "had been developed by the specialists on traditions" and that "it was left to al-Shāfi'ī to introduce as much of the specialized criticism as existed in his time into legal science."¹⁴⁴

From whom did al-Shāfi'ī obtain this knowledge of *ḥadīth* criticism? Schacht does not offer any suggestions in these chapters, but,

¹⁴² Note that Ibn Hanbal quotes Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān in numerous critical reports, the vast majority of which are negative; for example, *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 38–40 (Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad), 154 (Bishr b. Ḥarb), 173–4 (Thābit al-Bunānī); II, 141 (Sharīk al-Qaḍī), 314 (Abū Shihāb al-Ḥannāt), 322 ('Abd al-Rahmān b. Harmala); III, 8 ('Atā' b. Abī Maymūna), 159 (Fiṭr b. Khalīfa), 207 (Layth b. Abī Sulaym), 358 (Maṭar b. Ṭahmān); IV, 180 (Yūnus b. Yazīd al-Ayli), 193 (Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh).

¹⁴³ See chapters 3 and 5.

¹⁴⁴ These terms include *thābit*, *mashhūr*, *muttaṣil*, *munqaṭi'*, *mursal*, *ḍa'if*, and *munkar*; Schacht, *Origins*, 36. One should also add *thiqa* to this list.

given the preponderance of *ḥadīth* in the *Risāla* from his teachers Mālik and Ibn 'Uyayna,¹⁴⁵ whose credentials as critics are highly plausible, it would appear that these two Hījāzī authorities introduced al-Shāfi'ī to this new discipline. The necessity of a good education in the discipline of *ḥadīth* criticism in al-Shāfi'ī's jurisprudence is obvious from his core principle that

every [*ḥadīth*] related by *reliable persons* as going back to the Prophet, is authoritative and can be rejected only if another authoritative [*ḥadīth*] from the Prophet contradicts it; if it is a case of [abrogation] of a former ordinance by a later, the later is accepted; if nothing is known about an [abrogation], the *more reliable* of the two [*ḥadīth*] is to be followed; if both are *equally reliable*, the one more in keeping with the Qur'ān and the remaining undisputed parts of the sunna of the Prophet is to be chosen . . . (emphases mine).¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, al-Shāfi'ī explicitly rejects the practice of the imprecise transmission of *ḥadīth* (*bi-l-ma'nā*) and comes out strongly against the practice of *tadlīs* in the *Risāla*.¹⁴⁷ Finally, al-Shāfi'ī's definition of the irregular (*shādhidh*) *ḥadīth* left a deep imprint on the Sunnī disciplines of *ḥadīth* (*ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*), as it is found in the books of Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Adī, and even Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddima* that I discussed above in the second chapter.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Majid Khadduri counts 38 *ḥadīth* from Mālik, 35 from Ibn 'Uyayna, and six or fewer *ḥadīth* from his remaining named authorities in the *Risāla*; see his translation *al-Imām Muḥammad ibn Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī's al-Risāla fī uṣūl al-fiqh: Treatise on the Foundations of Islamic Jurisprudence*, second edition (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1997), 26. Mālik and Ibn 'Uyayna are also particularly prominent sources of *ḥadīth* in al-Shāfi'ī's book *Ikhtilāf al-ḥadīth* (Beirut: Mu'assasa al-Kutub al-Thaqafiyya, 1985).

¹⁴⁶ Scacht, *Origins*, 12.

¹⁴⁷ Khadduri, *al-Risāla*, 239–40. There is a serious mistake in this edition concerning the definition of *tadlīs*; the text should read "He must not be an interpolator, attributing to someone whom he has met that which he has not heard from him" instead of "someone whom he has not met;" *ibid.*, 240. The Arabic reads: *bariyyan min an yakūna mudallisan—yuhaddithu 'an man laqiya mā lam yasma' minhu*; al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Risāla*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Kabbārāh (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā'is, 1999), 197. For more references to al-Shāfi'ī's comments on *tadlīs*, see Scacht, *Origins*, 37.

¹⁴⁸ Al-Shāfi'ī's definition of a *shādhidh ḥadīth*, that it is "not a *ḥadīth* that only one reliable transmitter transmits, but rather a *ḥadīth* which many reliable transmitters transmit, one of whom transmits it in a unique and contradictory manner" (*laysa l-shādhidh min al-ḥadīth an yarwiya l-thiqātu ḥadīthan lam yarwihi ghayruhu innamā l-shādhidh min al-ḥadīth an yarwiya l-thiqātu ḥadīthan fa-yashidhdha 'anhum wāḥidun fa-yukhālī-fahum*); Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Ādāb al-Shāfi'ī wa manāqibuhu* (Cairo, 1954), 233, Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 124 (slightly different wording), and *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ*, 237 (another slight variant).

The most important question that arises is whether or not al-Shāfi'ī was himself a *ḥadīth* critic. Wael Hallaq has answered this question unequivocally in the negative with his assertion that "[al-Shāfi'ī] was neither a loyal traditionalist nor an outstanding traditionalist."¹⁴⁹ Melchert observes that al-Shāfi'ī "calls on traditionalists as outside experts rather than engaging directly, himself, in *ḥadīth* criticism."¹⁵⁰ This finding is supported by several of the authors whose works I have examined in this chapter. Ibn Abī Ḥātim does not include al-Shāfi'ī among his master critics in the *Taqdima*, and his book devoted to the virtues and manners of al-Shāfi'ī includes an insubstantial number of critical comments, which are occasionally quite colorful, regarding individual *ḥadīth* transmitters.¹⁵¹ Ibn 'Adī, who provides a relatively extensive entry for al-Shāfi'ī among critics of the fourth *ṭabaqa* of *ḥadīth* experts, reports only two examples of his grades, one of which is "unknown" (*lā yu'rafu*) and the other of which is *ḥāfiẓ*, in *al-Kāmil fī du'afā' al-rjāl*.¹⁵² Neither al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī nor al-Mizzī include any evidence of al-Shāfi'ī's acumen in *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism in their biographical notices,¹⁵³ and the latter reports that al-Bukhārī only included two of al-Shāfi'ī's legal definitions in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and that neither he nor Muslim incorporated any of al-Shāfi'ī's *ḥadīth* in their books.¹⁵⁴ Despite the lack of evidence of al-Shāfi'ī's influence upon the discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, he is remembered quite fondly in the books of the fourth/tenth

¹⁴⁹ Wael Hallaq, "Was al-Shāfi'ī the Master Architect of Islamic Jurisprudence?" *IJMES*, 25 (1993), 593. Hallaq's reasoning for this comment comes from al-Shāfi'ī's association with several Mu'tazila, and from the facts that he "betrayed his comrades when he insisted on the essential role of *qiyas* in the law" and that his basic knowledge of *ḥadīth* was "flawed."

¹⁵⁰ Melchert, "Traditionist-Jurists and the Framing of Islamic Law," 393–4.

¹⁵¹ Examples include al-Shāfi'ī's opinion that the *ḥadīth* of Ḥarām b. 'Uthmān is "illicit" (*ḥarām*); that Abū 'Āliya al-Riyāḥī's *ḥadīth* is "hot air" (*riyāḥ*, literally "wind"), and that the books of al-Wāqidī are mendacious (*kadhīb*); see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Ādāb al-Shāfi'ī*, 217–21. Some less colorful comments are al-Shāfi'ī's declaration of Dāwūd b. Shābūr as among the reliable transmitters (*min al-thiqāt*) and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam as weak (*da'afu*); *ibid.*, 223, 227.

¹⁵² Ibn 'Adī, *al-Kāmil*, I, 124. The unknown scholar is Ḥānī' b. Ḥānī' and the *ḥāfiẓ* is the Kufan al-Manṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir. Al-Shāfi'ī also remarks, in this same report, that neither Abū Qilāba nor Ibn Abī Laylā saw the *ṣaḥābī* Bilāl in person.

¹⁵³ Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, II, 56–73 and al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, XXIV, 355–81.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 380–1. Al-Shāfi'ī's legal definitions are found in the chapters on *zakāt* (*bāb fī l-rikāz al-khums*) and sales (*buyū': bāb tafsīr al-'arāyā*); see Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-bārī*, IV, 133 and V, 134.

century *ḥadīth* scholars and their successors, presumably because of the importance he attached to their research that was unappreciated by most aspiring jurists of this era.¹⁵⁵

IV.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to elucidate the narrative of the emergence of *ḥadīth* criticism on the basis of the appropriate texts of the Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature and to evaluate its plausibility. I selected ten major sources and accumulated ninety-two names of potential critics. The analysis of these men included both chronological and hierarchical tripartite divisions that transformed the raw data into clearly identifiable categories. The second level of analysis involved translating the unwieldy tables into a one-page summary of seventeen primary and twenty-two secondary critics, whom I arranged into seven generations in order to clarify the historical narrative of this discipline. I argued on the basis of the extant textual evidence that the major Sunnī *ḥadīth* critics of the second and third periods of our historical development scheme were unequivocal critics, but I felt obliged to affirm the accuracy of this appellation for the nine primary critics of the first period. This defense was necessary due to a recent Western scholar's skepticism of the critical credentials of contemporaries of Shu'ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī, and, more significantly, because these scholars were the immediate predecessors to the authors of the three major third/ninth century texts which I subject to a rigorous analysis in the second part of this book.

I found a remarkable degree of consistency between the major

¹⁵⁵ Al-Shāfi'ī's relationship to the *ḥadīth* scholars of the third/ninth century remains hazy; Ibn Sa'd does not mention him and Ibn Abī Ḥātim mentions the lengths to which his teacher Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī went in acquiring the books of al-Shāfi'ī in Egypt; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *Ādāb al-Shāfi'ī*, 75. Hallaq also provides a list of some negative comments by Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Ma'in, and other scholars that has been preserved in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's hagiography of al-Shāfi'ī; see Hallaq, "Was al-Shāfi'ī the Master Architect?" p. 594. Perhaps the most amusing story regarding the relationship between al-Shāfi'ī and the *ḥadīth* scholars of this period is the report that Ibn Rāhawayh married a woman in Marw solely because she possessed the books of al-Shāfi'ī (*lam yatazawwaj bi-hā illā li-hāli kutubi l-Shāfi'ī*; *ibid.*, 64). On a more serious note, Ibn Abī Ḥātim recounts that Ibn Rāhawayh arranged his book *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* according to the chapters of al-Shāfi'ī's book (unnamed), while his *al-Jāmi' al-ṣaghīr* was modeled on the book by the same title by Sufyān al-Thawrī; *ibid.*

early sources and both Muslim's list of five Imāms and the story of the two-phase development of the craft of *ḥadīth* criticism as articulated by Ibn Hibbān in his *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*. My analysis of the rise in the application of technical terms of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism found primarily in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Taqdīm* and al-Bukhārī's *al-Du'afā' al-ṣaghīr* was the strongest testimony for the plausibility of Ibn Hibbān's explanation of the two-stage development of *ḥadīth* criticism. The three senior primary critics, al-Awzā'ī, Shu'ba, and Sufyān al-Thawrī do not appear to have employed any technical terms in the sources that I surveyed, whereas Mālik and Ibn 'Uyayna did so on a limited scale. Since the careers of al-Awzā'ī, Shu'ba, and Sufyān al-Thawrī overlap those of Mālik and Ibn 'Uyayna, it is quite conceivable that they too employed some of these technical terms as early as the first half of the second/eighth century. If Dickinson's argument that Ibn Abī Ḥātim attempted dishonestly to cast Shu'ba and his contemporaries as critics is tenable, it is remarkable that Ibn Abī Ḥātim did not include any examples from his vast repertoire of reports in which these men use the term *thiqa* and yet did choose to include multiple *thiqa* reports on the authority of a scholar like Wakī'. The only scholar of the nine primary critics whose capacity as a critic is *not* supported strongly by the limited selection of early texts I have studied is that of the eldest one, al-Awzā'ī; as he is neither included in the list of the five Imāms of Muslim nor among Ibn Hibbān's three "founders of the craft of *ḥadīth* criticism," I would like to suggest tentatively that his juridical acumen and intuition of the *sunna* caused later Eastern scholars to bestow an "honorary doctorate" of *ḥadīth* critic upon him despite the absence of clear evidence in support of his proficiency in this discipline.¹⁵⁶

The findings of this chapter have serious implications for both this book and the general approach to *ḥadīth* literature in Western scholarship. The most significant finding is that the eight primary critics for whom the evidence in support of their practice of *ḥadīth* criticism is credible all lived *prior* to the composition of al-Shāfi'ī's *Risāla*. I remarked in the introduction of this book that Schacht and his followers have credited this treatise that was composed near the end

¹⁵⁶ Recall, however, that Bouzenita's study of al-Awzā'ī cited above in note 57 provides examples of al-Awzā'ī's employment of critical terms extracted from two Syrian sources.

of al-Shāfiʿī's life with sublime powers and immediate global influence. The sources I have engaged, which are all significant works located within the Sunnī tradition of *ḥadīth* scholarship, tell a radically different story, namely that the first multi-topic *ḥadīth* books (*taṣnīf* or *muṣannaf*)¹⁵⁷ were compiled between the deaths of al-Zuhrī and al-Awzāʿī (c. 120–150/738–767) and that the rise of *ḥadīth* criticism at the level of the individual *ḥadīth* (Sufyān al-Thawrī) and occasionally at the level of transmitter (Shuʿba) was simultaneous with this development. The basic technical term for reliable, *thiqa*, appears in the opinions of Mālik and Ibn ʿUyayna, whereas the term for rejection, *taraka*, was used by their pupils. The last major term to enter circulation appears to be the one for unreliable transmitters, namely *ḍaʿīf*, since it is only found in the third person, usually in the mouths of Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813), Ibn Maḥdī (d. 198/814), or their contemporaries. Despite the small sample of critical reports upon which this argument is based, the combination of the high degree of consensus as to the identities of the nine primary critics across the centuries of the ten primary sources analyzed in this chapter with the actual critical reports preserved in books like the *Taqdima* and *al-Duʿafāʾ al-ṣaḡhīr* leaves us with a plausible narrative of the first two generations of master *ḥadīth* critics who set the stage for the major works of Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845), Ibn Maʿīn (d. 233/848), and Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855). We can only hope that future research will uncover more examples of the critical opinions of these early scholars, the majority of which seem to have been either forgotten or overshadowed by the accomplishments of the critics of the third/ninth century, in order to bury all doubts as to the authenticity of the periodization that I have proposed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GENERATION OF IBN SAʿD, IBN MAʿĪN, AND
IBN ḤANBAL: A PROSOPOGRAPHICAL STUDY

V.1

We have arrived at the generation in which the three scholars whose texts I shall examine in the remaining chapters of this book flourished. This generation corresponds closely with the eighth *ṭabaqa* of the *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* which I described briefly at the beginning of the third phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the third chapter.¹ It also follows immediately after the first generation of *ḥadīth* critics whose contributions to the crafts of *ḥadīth* criticism and *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism I have just assessed in the previous chapter of this study. The goal of this chapter is to provide a panoramic view of the religious and intellectual milieu of the first half of the third/ninth century during which Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal studied and taught prior to a rigorous analysis of their texts in Part II of this book.

The first section of this chapter consists of an analysis of the five basic groups of men into which the 345 entries of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of al-Dhahabī's *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* fall and devotes special attention to the topics of literary production and individual contributions to *ḥadīth* transmission.² The first group consists of the political leaders, poets, and masters of *belle lettres* (*udabāʾ*) of this generation, while the second one consists of theologians who specialized in dialectics (*kalām*). The third category of men is a group of virtuous ascetics (*zuhhād*) and an early mystic (*ṣūfī*), most of whom, like the members of the previous two groups, played little role in *ḥadīth* transmission. The sixteen judges (*qāḍīs*) and thirty-six jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) and *muftīs* comprise the fourth group and are of particular importance for this study because their biographical notices shed light on the

¹⁵⁷ These books would have included much that was not *ḥadīth*, such as *āthār* and historical *akhbār*, but they are being called *ḥadīth* books merely due to the presence of some Prophetic *ḥadīth* within their pages.

¹ See above, III.4.

² Note that these five groups are not mutually exclusive, and that several scholars are members of two or even three of them.

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¹ See above, III.4.

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poorly understood relationship between the disciplines of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and *ḥadīth* scholarship during this period prior to the crystallization of the Sunnī schools of law (*madhāhib*).³ The final group of men, the *ḥadīth* scholars, is, ironically perhaps, the hardest group to pinpoint, and our analysis focuses primarily upon the scholars whom al-Dhahabī evaluates as *ḥujja* or Shaykh al-Islām, or whose *ḥadīth* is present in all six of the canonical Sunnī books, or who compiled *ḥadīth* books on their own. This section concludes with a synthesis of the myriad names extracted from al-Dhahabī's *Siyar* into a coherent portrait of the centers of *ḥadīth* scholarship on the eve of the compilation of the unparalleled *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

The second section of this chapter provides a brief reexamination of a historical event of this period that has generated some attention in the modern secondary literature, namely the *miḥna* (inquisition) inaugurated during the last four months of al-Ma'mūn's reign and executed until the early years of al-Mutawakkil. This episode is accorded major significance by Western scholars such as Ira Lapidus, Martin Hinds, and John Nawas, several of whose opinions display an uncamouflaged contempt for the pious religious scholars whose lives were disrupted for little obvious benefit to the caliphate. This event has been approached almost exclusively through the lens of the Muslim chroniclers in general, and al-Ṭabarī in particular, and has been described by Lapidus, Hinds, and Nawas as a watershed event in the relationship between the religious scholars and the caliphate. A more subtle and convincing analysis has been put forth recently by Muhammad Qasim Zaman, but he too devotes the bulk of his study to caliphal policies and relies primarily upon the books of the famous Muslim historians instead of the works of *ḥadīth* literature. My investigation departs from this scholarship by means of its fresh focus upon the impact of the *miḥna* on the fields of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism, and we demonstrate the negligible effect that an 'incorrect' response to the nature of the Qur'ān had upon individual *ḥadīth* transmitters' reputations in the eyes of their illustrious pupils like al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

³ Melchert dates the foundation of the Ḥanafī *madhhab* to Abū l-Ḥasan al-Karkhī (d. 340/952), the Shāfi'ī one to Ibn Surayj (d. 306/918), and the Ḥanbalī to al-Khallāl (d. 311/923); *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law*, 125, 87–92, and 147–55, respectively. The Mālikī school is somewhat harder to date; it appears to have emerged quite early in al-Andalus and Qayrawān, but ultimately failed in Baghdad; *ibid.*, 155–77.

The final section of this chapter provides biographical sketches for Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, the three scholars whose critical *ḥadīth* works are subjected to rigorous analyses in the remaining chapters of this book. I also include a sketch of each of the primary transmitters of the texts we are studying: Ibn Fahm and al-Ḥārith b. Abī Usāma for Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, 'Abbās al-Dūrī for Ibn Ma'in's *Tārīkh*, and Ibn Ḥanbal's son, 'Abdullāh, who is the sole transmitter of the *Musnad* and many of his critical opinions (*'ilal*). This section serves as a bridge between the preliminary studies of *ḥadīth* transmission and criticism that occupied the preceding three chapters to the analyses of critical texts that played a fundamental role in the emergence of Sunnī Islam that occupy the remainder of this study.

V.2 A Prosopographical panorama of the first half of the third/ninth century

V.2.1

The primary source for this broad introduction to third/ninth century Islamicate civilization is the *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* of our Mamlūk-era guide al-Dhahabī that I discussed above in the first chapter. I have constructed a database of the 345 men⁴ found in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*, and all but eleven of the men whose death dates were recorded passed away between the years 211–250/826–864.⁵ It should come as no surprise that al-Dhahabī's collection

⁴ There are actually 343 men and two royal women, Zaynab *bint* al-Amīr Sulaymān and Zubayda, the famous wife of Hārūn al-Rashīd (*Siyar*, X, 238 and 241) mentioned in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*; for the sake of convenience, I shall refer to this aggregate as "345 men" when necessary in the remainder of this chapter. Note also that one man, Aḥmad b. 'Āsim al-Anṭākī, has two entries, one under his *nisba* and one under his first name (*ism*); *ibid.*, XI, 409 and X, 487, respectively.

⁵ These entries are located in *Siyar*, X, 209 through XI, 515. Al-Dhahabī neglects to mention a death date in only twenty-seven of the 345 entries. Note that these two *ṭabaqāt* will be considered as one generation for this study because it is quite clear that all of these men were contemporaries and that few of the twelfth *ṭabaqā* scholars transmitted material from members of the eleventh one. A few prominent members of the thirteenth *ṭabaqā* who lived during the first half of the third/ninth century, such as al-Jāḥiẓ, will be considered in the appropriate sections that follow.

of 'notables' is heavily weighted towards *ḥadīth* scholars in light of our discussion of his interests and approach to Islam in the second chapter of this study. However, the *Siyar*, in contrast to *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, contains numerous biographies of men who had either a lukewarm or nonexistent role in the venture of *ḥadīth* transmission and thus is an ideal work for the panoramic view of Islamic cultural life during the time of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal.

V.2.2 Caliphs, Governors, Poets, and Men of Letters

Only seven of the 345 entries of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* are members of the royal 'Abbāsīd household. The three caliphs of the age, al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, and al-Wāthiq are presented in succession in the *Siyar* and their relatively brief entries contain little more than outlines of major events, such as natural disasters and battles, that occurred during each of their respective reigns.⁶ The bulk of the information about the *miḥna*, in which these rulers played a major role, is to be found in the lengthy entry devoted to Ibn Ḥanbal, although the biography of al-Wāthiq does include the famous story of an anonymous Shaykh who convinced him of the error of the doctrine of the created Qur'ān by means of rather simple arguments.⁷ Maṣṣūr b. al-Mahdī (d. 236/850-1), a brother of Hārūn al-Rashīd, receives a notice presumably for his role as governor in Basra during his brother's caliphate and governor of Damascus during the brief reign of al-Amīn (193-8/

⁶ *Siyar*, X, 272-89 (al-Ma'mūn); 290-305 (al-Mu'taṣim); 306-14 (al-Wāthiq).

⁷ *Siyar*, X, 308-9. The gist of the story is the following: The shaykh asks the caliph if the Messenger of God, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and the caliphs knew that the Qur'ān was created or not. Al-Wāthiq takes the bait and says "They did not know this," to which the clever shaykh replies "Praise be to God! [There is] something that they did not know but that you do!" Al-Wāthiq asks for a second chance and the shaykh repeats the initial question. This time al-Wāthiq says "Yes, the Prophet knew that the Qur'ān was created," to which the shaykh replies "He knew this, but he did not teach it to the people?" Al-Wāthiq says "yes," at which point the shaykh inquires "And was this sufficient for him (i.e. not to teach this knowledge)?" Al-Wāthiq replies in the affirmative, allowing the shaykh to spring the final trap and say "Is not that which is sufficient for you that which is sufficient for the Prophet and the caliphs who followed him?" Al-Wāthiq left the company of the shaykh at this time, entered the hall of his courtiers, repeated the shaykh's argument and ordered the cessation of *miḥna*. Al-Dhahabī notes at the end of this anecdote with his characteristic candor that "there are unknown transmitters in the *isnād* of this story, and God only knows whether it is sound."

809-13).⁸ Finally, the talented singer and poet Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī (d. 224/839) also thrived during this period, and he appears to have dedicated his time to his artistic endeavors after al-Ma'mūn pardoned him for his brief bid for the caliphate in 202/817.⁹ The two final 'Abbāsīds, Zaynab (d. after 210/825) and Zubayda (d. 216/831), are the only women included in this generation and al-Dhahabī tells us precious little about their lives.¹⁰

Only four governors of this period, in addition to the two sons of al-Mahdī mentioned in the previous paragraph, impressed al-Dhahabī enough to warrant inclusion in *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm (d. 235/849-50) ruled Baghdad for thirty years and received a rather unsavory image due to his abuse of Ibn Ḥanbal and other scholars during the *miḥna*.¹¹ Abū Dulaf al-Qāsim (d. 225/840) receives praise for his bravery, generosity and poetry during his competent administration of Damascus for al-Mu'taṣim.¹² Asad b. al-Furāt (d. 213/828) was a unique combination of jurist, warrior, and governor under the Aghlabid rulers of Ifriqiyya and achieved fame for his leadership role in the difficult conquest of Sicily.¹³ Finally, the greatest non-caliphal patron of high culture of the age was 'Abdullāh b. Ṭāhir (d. 230/845), who was granted Egypt and Ifriqiyya by al-Ma'mūn and later proved fundamental in the establishment of Nishapur as a center of Islamicate civilization.¹⁴

⁸ *Siyar*, XI, 449-50. Al-Dhahabī reports that the people of Damascus asked him to seek the caliphate, but that he in fact declined their request.

⁹ *Siyar*, X, 557-61.

¹⁰ Zaynab, a cousin of the caliph al-Manṣūr, is remembered primarily for her longevity, as she was a child when the 'Abbāsīds were in Ḥumayma prior to the revolution and lived through the reign of al-Ma'mūn, who is reported to have honored her greatly (*kāna yukrimuhā wa yujilluhā*); *Siyar*, X, 238. Al-Dhahabī's brief notice for Zubayda, daughter of al-Manṣūr and wife of Hārūn, merely describes her wealth, patronage of the pilgrimage, the presence of a hundred slave girls in her palace that had memorized the Qur'ān, and an anecdote in which she praises al-Ma'mūn despite the fact that one of his generals killed her son al-Amīn in the civil war; *ibid.*, X, 241.

¹¹ *Siyar*, XI, 171. Al-Dhahabī remarks that his son Muḥammad succeeded him in this post.

¹² *Siyar*, X, 563-4.

¹³ *Siyar*, X, 225-8. His controversial role as a jurist will be discussed below; note that he is reported to have transmitted a version of the *Muwatta'* that is mentioned neither by Sezgin nor Yasin Dutton; see *GAS*, I, 459-60 and *The Origins of Islamic Law*, 23-4.

¹⁴ *Siyar*, X, 684-5. Two of the most prominent scholars to receive his patronage were the philologist Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. al-Sallām, whom we shall hear about

Al-Dhahabī identifies nine Arabic poets of the first half of the third/ninth century in the *Siyar*. These include the 'Abbāsīd prince Ibrāhīm b. Mahdī and the governor Abū Dulaf whom we just mentioned, and the notorious prosecutor of the *miḥna*, Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād (d. 240/854–5).¹⁵ Abū l-Yanbaghī (no date) specialized in panegyrics and satire at the courts of al-Manṣūr to al-Mu'taṣim,¹⁶ Dīk al-Jinn (d. 235–6/849–51) was a Shī'ī poet in Ḥimṣ who gained notoriety for the murder of his former slave wife out of jealousy,¹⁷ and Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd al-Allāh al-'Utbī (d. 228/843) excelled in history, verse, and drinking.¹⁸ Maḥmūd al-Warrāq (no date) is of particular interest because he is the only one of these nine men reported to have composed poems of a religious nature (*fi l-mawā'iz*), although al-Dhahabī does not record any examples of this kind of verse in his entry.¹⁹ Finally, Sa'īd b. 'Ufayr (d. 226/841) excelled in the disciplines of history, genealogy, and even *ḥadīth* in addition to poetry to such a degree that Ibn Ma'īn stated "There are three wonders in Egypt: the Nile, the pyramids, and Sa'īd b. 'Ufayr!"²⁰

Two poets of this period tower above their contemporaries and both of them enjoyed the munificent patronage of the highest echelons of the 'Abbāsīd court. The founding father of Arabic music, poet, and self-appointed jurist of the courts from Hārūn al-Rashīd to al-Wāthiq was Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī (d. 235/850).²¹ Al-

shortly, and the *ḥadīth* scholar Ishāq b. Rāhawayh, whom we mentioned above in the first generation of the third phase of *ḥadīth* scholarship.

¹⁵ *Siyar*, XI, 169–71. Al-Dhahabī includes several verses attributed to him that he would recite in his post-prayer supplications, a practice not commonly associated with the pious-minded 'ulamā'.

¹⁶ *Siyar*, X, 615–6. The editors of the *Siyar* were unable to find this poet in any of the biographical sources that have survived; al-Dhahabī obtained his information from one of the works of 'Abd al-Jabbār b. 'Imrān al-Marzubānī (d. 384/994).

¹⁷ *Siyar*, XI, 163–4; *EI2*, II, 275–6. His real name was 'Abd al-Salām b. Raghbān.

¹⁸ *Siyar*, XI, 96; *EI2*, X, 945–6. Sezgin has identified numerous fragments of his works in al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*; *GAS*, I, 372.

¹⁹ *Siyar*, XI, 461–2. Ten verses from three poems about youth and aging attributed to Maḥmūd al-Warrāq can be found in al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥayyān wa l-tabyīn*, III (Beirut: Dār al-Khayr, n.d.), 197–8.

²⁰ *Siyar*, XI, 583–6. Sa'īd b. Kathīr b. 'Ufayr is the only poet in this generation of the *Siyar* to be found in any of the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books; his transmissions can be found in the books of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and al-Nasā'ī. Sezgin remarks that he is the first scholar to compose a history of al-Andalus which, along with his other works, is now lost; *GAS*, I, 361. Al-Bukhārī included 43 *ḥadīth* from Sa'īd in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 33 of which came from al-Layth b. Sa'd; Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 289 (*isnād* #245).

²¹ *Siyar*, XI, 118–21; *EI2*, IV, 110–11. Al-Dhahabī's entry is a succinct para-

Dhahabī neglects to mention the major incident of jealousy and rivalry between Ishāq and the 'Abbāsīd prince Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī (who had a rather high opinion of his own talents) that had to be mitigated by al-Rashīd's stern efforts,²² but does include a truncated version of an insightful report of Ishāq's daily schedule:

I spent a part of my life going to Hushaym²³ or another *ḥadīth* scholar each morning prior to sunrise, and then to al-Kisā'ī or al-Farrā' or Ibn Ghazāla in order to read a *juz'*²⁴ of the Qur'ān. I would then proceed to Abū Manṣūr Zalzal and he would teach me two or three melodies [on the 'ūd (lute)], and then I would learn a song or two (*sawt*) from 'Ātika bint Shahda. Then I would proceed to al-Aṣma'ī and Abū 'Ubayda and benefit greatly from their knowledge. [Then I would go to my father and tell him what I had done and whom I had seen that day and have dinner with him.]²⁵ Then I would attend the evening session (*majlis*) of [the caliph Hārūn] al-Rashīd.²⁶

Although Ishāq al-Mawṣilī is reported to have been embarrassed by his fame as a singer, the anecdote that al-Ma'mūn "would have made him a *qāḍī*" had he not been such a well known singer indicates where his primary talents lay.²⁷ He also appears to have been both an avid book collector and compiler, as al-Aṣma'ī was amazed by the sixteen trunks of books that he hauled with Hārūn al-Rashīd to the summer palace at Raqqa, and Yāqūt mentions no fewer than thirty-two of his own works.²⁸

The most extraordinary poet of the age was the Christian convert to Islam, Abū Tammām Ḥabīb b. Aws (d. 231/845 or 228/843).²⁹

phrase of Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī's (d. 626/1229) lengthy entry and hardly does justice to this most influential courtier; Yāqūt, *Muḥjam al-udabā'*, II (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1991), 129–56. The *EI2* article draws primarily on the long entry found in Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī's *Kitāb al-aghānī*, V (Cairo, 1963), 153–258.

²² *Muḥjam al-udabā'*, II, 133–5.

²³ Note that this is one of the first *ḥadīth* scholars with whom Ibn Ḥanbal is reported to have spent a significant amount of time while a student.

²⁴ This expression can either mean "a part of the Qur'ān" in a general sense, or a "thirtieth of the Qur'ān" in a technical one.

²⁵ This sentence is found only in *Muḥjam al-udabā'*, II, 131.

²⁶ *Siyar*, 119–20. Note that the version in *Muḥjam al-udabā'*, II, 130–1 reports that Ishāq read a *juz'* of the Qur'ān to both al-Kisā'ī and al-Farrā', but does not mention Ibn Ghazāla; likewise, it also indicates that he would recite poetry (*unāshiduhu*) to al-Aṣma'ī and discuss it (*udhākiruhu*) with Abū 'Ubayda.

²⁷ *Siyar*, XI, 120; *Muḥjam al-udabā'*, II, 130.

²⁸ *Siyar*, XI, 120; *Muḥjam al-udabā'*, II, 155. None of these works appears to have survived; *GAS*, I, 371.

²⁹ *Siyar*, XI, 63–9.

Abū Tammām's fame first emerged from his panegyrics to al-Mu'taṣim and his courtiers and may have peaked with his most famous *qaṣīda* in honor of the victory at Amorium whose opening lines are:

The sword is more veracious than the book,
Its cutting edge splits earnestness
From sport.

The white of the blade, not the black of the page,
Its broadsides clarify uncertainty
And doubt.

Knowledge lies in the bright spears gleaming
Between two armies, not in the seven
Gleaming stars.³⁰

Among the verses selected by al-Dhahabī in the *Siyar* are the following:

Were sustenance attained only by those with intelligence
The beasts would then perish out of their ignorance!
Just as east and west cannot join with facility,
Neither can a man who clings to wealth be of nobility.³¹

Abū Tammām's 'modern' style of poetry has never ceased from its inception to elicit strong reactions from literary critics, Muslim and Western alike, and a thorough discussion of this topic is far beyond the scope of this book.³²

The final group of scholars to whom we shall turn in this section is that of the masters of *adab*, or *belle lettres*.³³ Ḥājib b. al-Walīd (d. 228/843) and Muḥammad b. Ḥātim al-Zammī (d. 246/861) are

³⁰ Suzanne Pickney Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the 'Abbāsid Age* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 187. Al-Dhahabī includes the first and third of these lines in his entry on al-Mu'taṣim; *Siyar*, X, 303. The Arabic is: *al-sayfu aṣḍaḡu anba'an min al-kutubī/ft ḥaddihī l-ḥaddu bayna l-jiddī wa l-la'ibī; biḍu l-ṣafā'ihi lā sūdu l-ṣahā'ifi ft/ mutūnihinna jilā'u l-shakki wa l-riyabī; wa l-'ilmu fi shuhubī l-armāhi lāmi'alan/bayn l-khamisayni lā fi l-sab'ati l-shuhubī*; Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 375.

³¹ *wa law kānāti l-arzāqu tujrā 'alā l-ḥijā/halakna idhan min jahlihinna l-bahā'imū; wa lam yaqtamī sharqun wa gharbun li-qāṣidin/wa lā l-majdu fi kaffi-mr'in wa l-darāhimu*; *Siyar*, XI, 66. The verses come from a *qaṣīda* in praise of Ibn Abī Duwād in the *Dīwān* of Abū Tammām; the translation is mine.

³² A historical outline of these opinions can be found in the article "Abū Tammām" by Helmut Ritter in the *EI2*, I, 153–55.

³³ Five additional scholars of prominence in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar* who do not fit into any of these categories are Muḥammad b. Ziyād Ibn al-A'rābī (d. 231/846), Abū Mūsā Qālūn (d. 220/835), 'Abd al-Mālik b. Hishām (d. 218/833), Abū 'Umar al-Jarmī (d. 225/840), and Abū l-Rabī' al-Zahrānī (d. 234/848–9). Ibn al-A'rābī was a pupil of al-Kisā'ī and educated the sixteenth *ṭabaqat* litterateur Tha'lab (d. 291/904) for nineteen years, while Qālūn was skilled in gram-

identified as private tutors (*mu'addib*) and they both have *ḥadīth* transmissions in at least one of the six canonical Sunnī books.³⁴ Ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 233/848), the famous *wazīr* of al-Mu'taṣim and al-Wāthiq whose feud with Ibn Abī Duwād led to his fall from favor under al-Mutawakkil, was renowned for his literary talents.³⁵ 'Alī b. 'Aththām (d. 228/843) is a particularly interesting case of a jurist-*adīb* who emigrated from Kufa to Nishapur and achieved prominence for his refusal to join Ibn Ṭāhir's court.³⁶ Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī described this pious scholar as one who "was reluctant to teach *ḥadīth* and from whom students took many stories (*ḥikāyāt*), tales of asceticism, exegesis, and *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism."³⁷ Muḥammad b. Sallām al-Jumāhī (d. 231/846) came to Baghdad in 222/837 and is credited with one of the earliest books of the *ṭabaqāt* genre which has survived to this day.³⁸ Finally, the Basran 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. 224/839) befriended Ishāq al-Mawṣilī in Baghdad and composed hundreds of presumably short works of history and genealogy all of which appear to have been lost.³⁹

mar in addition to his fame as a disciple of the Qur'an-reciter Nāfi'. Ibn Hishām's abridgement of Ibn Ishāq's *al-Sīrat al-nabawiyya* has remained one of the most popular texts in Islamic civilization to this day. Al-Jarmī is considered to have had the best understanding of Sībawayhi's *Kiṭāb* and al-Zahrānī composed a well-known work of variant readings of the Qur'an; *Siyar*, X, 687–8, 326–7, 428–9, 561–3, 676–8, respectively.

³⁴ *Siyar*, XI, 61–2 (Ḥājib); XI, 452–3 (Muḥammad). The former has *ḥadīth* in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*; the latter has material in the books of al-Tirmidhī and al-Nasā'ī. Ḥājib lived in Baghdad and Muḥammad al-Zammī served at the court in Sāmarrā'.

³⁵ *Siyar*, XI, 172–3.

³⁶ *Siyar*, X, 569–71. 'Alī's *ḥadīth* can be found in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and al-Dhahabī identified him as a Shaykh al-Islām and example (*quḍwa*); it appears that al-Dhahabī's usage of the term Shaykh al-Islām is more liberal in the *Siyar* than the *Tadhkira*, for 'Alī b. 'Aththām does not even earn an entry in the latter work.

³⁷ *lā yuḥaddithu illā bi-l-juḥdī wa aktharu mā ukhidha 'anhu al-ḥikāyātu wa l-zuhdiyyātu wa l-lafṣīru, wa l-jarḥu wa l-lā'ḍilū*; *Siyar*, X, 570.

³⁸ *Siyar*, X, 651–2. An alternative death date is 231/846. His book *Ṭabaqāt al-shu'arā* is divided into three sections: pre-Islamic poets (ten *ṭabaqāt* plus elegists), poets of the Arab towns, and the Islamic poets (ten *ṭabaqāt*); *Ṭabaqāt al-shu'arā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 1988).

³⁹ *Siyar*, X, 400–2. Al-Dhahabī mentions sixteen titles and remarks that the entire list would fill five and a half pages. Yāqūt divides 'Alī's vast corpus into the categories of 1) reports of the life of the Prophet, 2) reports of the Quraysh, 3) reports of the marriages of the noble tribesmen and reports of women, 4) reports of the caliphs, 5) reports of battles (*ahdāth*), 6) reports of the conquests, 7) reports of the Bedouins, and 8) reports of the poets; *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, IV, 223–227. For surviving fragments of his works in later sources, see *GAS*, I, 314–5.

The most significant member of this class of scholars for this study is Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/839). A tutor in the service of the family of the general Harthama b. A'yān, Abū 'Ubayd moved to Ibn Ṭāhir's court in Nishapur where he composed several of his most famous works. These compositions include the legal work *Kitāb al-amwāl*,⁴⁰ *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, and his two major lexicons of exotic Arabic words, *Gharīb al-muṣannaf* and *Gharīb al-ḥadīth*.⁴¹ Al-Dhahabī states that *Gharīb al-muṣannaf* was composed over a forty year period, that the first scholar to hear this book was Abū 'Ubayd's longtime friend Yahyā b. Ma'īn, and that Abū 'Ubayd spent a third of the night in prayer, a third asleep, and a third composing books.⁴² Abū 'Ubayd served as a *qāḍī* for eighteen years in Tarsus and boasted that he convinced the great *ḥadīth* critic Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān to abandon his Murjī'ī practice of recognizing the legitimacy of only the first two caliphs, Abū Bakr and 'Umar.⁴³ Finally, al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī's observation that Abū 'Ubayd was intimate with the *ḥadīth* scholars of his day while the slightly later Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) failed to earn their respect indicates a qualitative difference between these two jurist-*adībs*, both of whom composed books of relevance for *ḥadīth* studies.⁴⁴

The last master *adīb* must not be forgotten, 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868), landed in the thirteenth *ṭabaqa* of the *Siyar* due to his longevity, but flourished during the period under discussion.⁴⁵ A master stylist of Arabic prose, compiler, and Mu'tazilī theologian, al-Jāḥiẓ's influence and achievements can hardly be reduced to a single paragraph with any degree of justice. Goldziher cited long ago al-

⁴⁰ For Abū 'Ubayd's *Kitāb al-amwāl* see the excellent study by Andreas Görke, *Das Kitāb al-Amwāl des Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām. Entstehung und Werüberlieferung*, PhD thesis, Hamburg 2000. (Thanks to the anonymous reviewer for this reference.)

⁴¹ All four of these works have been published. Note also his theological work *Kitāb al-imān* which has been studied by Wilferd Madelung in "Early Sunnī Doctrine Concerning Faith as Reflected in the *Kitāb al-imān* of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām (d. 224/839)," *Studia Islamica* 32 (1970), 233–54.

⁴² *Siyar*, X, 496–9.

⁴³ *Siyar*, X, 498 and 501.

⁴⁴ Ibn Qutayba has received a thorough study by Gérard Lecomte, a summary of which can be found in his entry "Ibn Qutayba" in the *EL2*. Although Ibn Qutayba sought to defend his contemporary *ḥadīth* scholars against the attacks of the Mu'tazila, there does not appear to have been much appreciation on the part of the *ḥadīth* scholars for his labors; see below, note 208.

⁴⁵ *Siyar*, XI, 526–30.

Jāḥiẓ's most insightful observation regarding *ḥadīth* scholars that is worth quoting in full:⁴⁶

Our experience is that a person studies [*ḥadīth*] for nearly fifty years, concerns himself with exegesis of the Koran and lives among religious scholars, without being counted among the *fuqahā'* or being able to obtain the office of judge. This he can only achieve if he studies the works of Abū Ḥanīfa and the like and learns by heart the practical legal formulae (*shurūṭ*); all this can be done in one or two years. In only a very short time such a person will be appointed as judge over a town or even a whole province.

A suggestive anecdote that testifies to al-Jāḥiẓ's fundamental role in the development of Islamic civilization is the fact that the strict critic al-Dhahabī, no friend of the Mu'tazila, offers a supplication for divine forgiveness on his behalf at the end of his entry in the *Siyar*. Whether the rationally guided al-Jāḥiẓ would have really desired this anti-intellectual pupil of Ibn Taymiyya to request divine forgiveness on his behalf, is, of course, an altogether different question.

It should be clear from this brief survey of extra-religious cultural figures why Marshall Hodgson identified this age as the 'golden age' of Arabic *adab* in the *Venture of Islam*. The munificence of the 'Abbāsīd courts in Baghdad and Sāmarrā', and Ibn Ṭāhir's patronage in Nishapur fostered a climate of creativity and brilliance in the fields of poetry, music, *belle lettres*, history, and philology. Abū Tammām, Ishāq al-Mawṣilī, Abū l-Ḥasan b. al-Madā'inī, Abū 'Ubayd, and al-Jāḥiẓ set standards of excellence in their respective fields that were rarely surpassed by their successors. The textual legacy of the period includes works by these five luminaries as well as the *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'* of al-Jumāhī and the lost histories of Sa'īd b. 'Ufayr, and the fact that so much of it has survived to this day indicates the value Muslims have accorded it over the centuries. Finally, it is interesting to note that a few of these men, such as Abū 'Ubayd, Sa'īd b. 'Ufayr, 'Alī b. 'Aththām, Ḥājib b. al-Walīd, and Muḥammad b. Ḥātim contributed to the vast enterprise of *ḥadīth* compilation that was rapidly gathering momentum during this period of literary florescence.

⁴⁶ *Muslim Studies*, II, 215–6. The source of this quote is al-Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-ḥayawān*.

V.2.3 *Mu'tazila and other theologians*

The period under discussion is perhaps most renowned for the speculative dexterity of numerous independent-minded theologians lumped under the name *Mu'tazila*. Most of these scholars hailed from Basra and found a welcome reception at the 'Abbāsīd court under the protection of Yaḥyā l-Barmakī as early as the period of Hārūn al-Rashīd.⁴⁷ The hard labors of Richard Frank, Wilferd Madelung, Hans Daiber, and Josef van Ess over the past several decades have clarified the positions of major thinkers of this period, such as Abū l-Hudhayl al-'Allāf, Abū Ishāq al-Nazzām, Mu'ammār b. 'Abbād, and Ja'far b. Ḥarb, whose numerous books survive for the most part only in fragments of later theological works.⁴⁸ It is critically important to realize that the *Mu'tazila* of this period were unified merely in their methodology and that the two classical schools of the *Mu'tazila*, the Basran and Baghdādī, did not mature until the period after the one under consideration.⁴⁹

Despite al-Dhahabī's manifest aversion to all speculative theology, *Mu'tazilī* or *Ash'arī*, he felt obliged to include a ghetto of nineteen theologians in *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* if only because the entire ordeal of the *miḥna* makes little sense without their existence.⁵⁰ He offers very little in the way of explanation of their beliefs, and the following humorous anecdote that he gleaned from the philologist al-Mubarrad (d. 285/898) serves as his strongest suggestion as to why the entire *Mu'tazilī* project failed to appeal to either the masses or the *ḥadīth* scholars:

A man said to Hishām al-Fuwāṭī "How many years do you number?"⁵¹ Hishām replied "From one to over a thousand." The man said "I did not mean that. How much age (*ṣinn*) do you have?" Hishām replied "I have thirty-two teeth (*ṣinn*)." The man said "How many years do you have?" Hishām replied "None, they all belong to God." The man asked "So what is your age?" Hishām replied "Great (*ʿaẓm*)."

⁴⁷ See Josef van Ess, "Ḍirar b. 'Amr," Supplement, *EI2*, 225 for a description of the circle of the Barmakids that included Ḍirar, the Shī'ī Hishām b. al-Ḥakam, the Ibādī 'Abdullāh b. Yazīd, and the Zaydī Sulaymān b. Jarīr.

⁴⁸ These four men all receive brief notices in the *Siyar*, X, 541–50.

⁴⁹ See the excellent *EI2* article by D. Gimaret "Mu'tazila."

⁵⁰ *Siyar*, X, 541–56.

⁵¹ Each of the following questions is a commonly accepted method of asking "How old are you?" in Arabic; the anecdote only works with a literal translation of the questions.

The man asked "So you are the son of how many?" Hishām replied "Son of a mother and father!" The man said "So how many years have come upon you?" Hishām replied "Had anything come upon me, it would have killed me!" The man said "Curse you! What should I say?" Hishām replied "How much of your life has passed?"⁵²

A few general observations about individuals located in this short section of *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* will suffice for this chapter. First, Abū Mūsā l-Mardār (d. 226/841) and Abū Mujālid Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 268/862) are reported to have been ascetics in addition to being theologians, and the latter is also reported to have been a jurist.⁵³ Secondly, Abū Mūsā 'Īsā b. al-Haytham is one of the only men of this generation whom al-Dhahabī identifies as a *Ṣūfī* and can be seen as a precursor to the extraordinary *Mu'tazilī-Ṣūfī* al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī (d. 243/857) who flourished during this time as well.⁵⁴ Thirdly, the first steps towards a *Sunnī* speculative theology can be seen in the works of al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Najjār (d. around 240/854) and Ibn Kullāb (d. 240/854), the latter of whom composed a book entitled *Refutation of the Mu'tazila*.⁵⁵ Finally, sixteen theologians are credited by al-Dhahabī with having composed books, virtually none of which have survived, and, perhaps less surprising, none of them transmitted a single *ḥadīth* that found its way into any of the six canonical *Sunnī* books.

V.2.4 *Ascetics*

The third category of notables in *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* transports us from the legendary 'Abbāsīd palaces associated with the poets, *udabā'*, and theologians of the previous sections to the humble houses of renunciation and pious supplication. Eighteen men are identified explicitly by al-Dhahabī in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* as either ascetics (*zāhid*) or specialists in asceticism

⁵² The correct question is *kam maḍā min 'umrika?* *Siyar*, X, 547.

⁵³ *Siyar*, X, 548 and 553. A third particularly pious *Mu'tazilī* of this period is Ja'far b. Ḥarb (d. 236/850), who left the sessions of al-Wāthiq and refused to pray behind the caliph, although the reason for this is not explained by al-Dhahabī; *Siyar*, X, 549–50.

⁵⁴ Abū Mūsā's reputation was tarnished by the fact that he was a teacher of the notorious heretic (*mulḥid*) Ibn al-Rawandī; *Siyar*, X, 552. The Baghdādī al-Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī is located in the thirteenth *ṭabaqa* of the *Siyar* and is identified as Shaykh al-Ṣūfiyya; *Siyar*, XII, 110–2.

⁵⁵ *Siyar*, XI, 144–6.

(*zuhd*). We have just encountered three of these men among the theologians who avoided the 'Abbāsīd and Tāhirid courts, and remarked that Abū Mūsā 'Isā b. al-Haytham is the only Ṣūfī mentioned among the members of this generation. The following table provides an overview of these eighteen ascetics of the first half of the third/ninth century:

Table 5.1: Ascetics of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*

	Name	Date	City	<i>Ḥadīth</i> legacy ^a
1	Abū Mujālid Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn	268	Baghdad	Mu'tazilī (none)
2	Abū Mūsā 'Isā b. al-Haytham	245	Baghdad	Mu'tazilī (none)
3	Abū Naṣr al-Tammār, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz	228	Nasā, Baghdad	M, N
4	Aḥmad b. Ḥarb b. Fayrūz	234	Nishapur, Meccā	None
5	Aḥmad b. Khidrawayh al-Balkhī	240	Balkh, Baghdad	None
6	al-Anṭākī, Aḥmad b. 'Āsim	c. 230	Damascus	None
7	al-Barjulānī, Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn	238	Baghdad	None
8	Bishr al-Ḥāfi b. al-Hārith	227	Baghdad	None
9	Faṭḥ al-Mawṣilī Abū Naṣr b. Sa'id	220	Mosul, Baghdad	None
10	al-Ghāzzī, Muḥammad b. 'Amr	c. 240	Egypt	None
11	al-Ḥakam b. Mūsā	232	Baghdad	M, N, Q
12	Ḥātim al-Aṣamm b. 'Anwān al-Balkhī	237	Balkh, Baghdad	None
13	al-Haytham b. Khārīja	227	Baghdad	B (1), ^b N
14	Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh al-Harawī	244	Baghdad	T, Q
15	Khalaf b. Tamīm	213	Kufa, Maṣṣīṣa	N, Q
16	al-Mardār Abū Mūsā 'Isā b. Šābiḥ	226	Basra	Mu'tazilī (none)
17	Mujāhid b. Mūsā al-Khwarazimī	244	Baghdad	M, D, T, N, Q
18	al-Ramādī, Ibrāhīm b. Bashshār	224	Basra	D, T

^a The following abbreviations are used: B: Bukhārī, M: Muslim, D: Abū Dāwūd, T: Tirmidhī, N: al-Nasā'ī, and Q: Ibn Māja al-Qazvīnī. The numbers in parentheses refer to the number of *ḥadīth* included by al-Bukhārī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, according to Sezgin's *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*.

^b Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 239 (#101).

Two of the most influential ascetics of this period are Bishr al-Ḥāfi and Ḥātim al-Aṣamm, neither of whom transmitted *ḥadīth*.⁵⁶ Al-Dhahabī lauds Bishr al-Ḥāfi with the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām, even though he concedes that Bishr did not really understand the Arabic language.⁵⁷ Despite his studies with the likes of Mālik b. Anas, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād, Bishr's excuse for not transmitting *ḥadīth* is telling: "I desire to transmit *ḥadīth*, but anything that I desire, I renounce!"⁵⁸ Bishr appears to have adopted an extreme form of asceticism that included celibacy, something which led Ibn Ḥanbal to remark "Had Bishr married, he would have perfected himself."⁵⁹ Among the aphorisms attributed to Bishr al-Ḥāfi found in al-Dhahabī's entry are the following:

He who loves the thighs of women will not achieve salvation.⁶⁰
 You will not find the sweetness of worship until you put a barrier between you and desires.⁶¹
 No one who loves the temporal world wishes for death; he who abstains from the temporal word longs for the meeting with his Protector.⁶²
 Do not act in order to be mentioned—conceal the good deeds just as you conceal the bad ones.⁶³

Al-Dhahabī includes an even greater number of wise sayings of the "Luqmān of this Community," Ḥātim al-Aṣamm, than of Bishr al-Ḥāfi in the *Siyar*.⁶⁴ After he remarks that al-Aṣamm did not transmit anything on the authority of the Prophet (*musnad*), al-Dhahabī demonstrates his familiarity with al-Aṣamm's spiritual guidelines, including the following reports:

It was said to him: Upon what to you build your reliance upon God (*tawakkul*)? He replied: Upon four qualities: I know that only I will eat

⁵⁶ Bishr's dislike of *ḥadīth* and *ḥadīth* critics is explored in some detail in Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography* (Cambridge, 2000), 168–70.

⁵⁷ *Siyar*, X, 472. The source of this criticism is not revealed by al-Dhahabī.

⁵⁸ *anā ashtahī an uḥadditha wa idhā ishtahaytu shay'an, taraktuhū*; *Siyar*, X, 470.

⁵⁹ *law kāna Bishr tazawwaja la-tamma amruhu*; *Siyar*, X, 472 and 474.

⁶⁰ *lā yufīḥu man alifa afkhādha l-nisā'*; *Siyar*, X, 472. A similar version of this statement is attributed to Sufyān al-Thawrī: *man aḥabba afkhādha l-nisā'i lam yufīḥi*; *ibid.*, VII, 258.

⁶¹ *lā tajidu ḥalāwata l-'ibādati ḥattā tafāla baynaka wa bayna l-shahawāti saddan*; *Siyar*, X, 473.

⁶² *laysa aḥadun yuḥibbu l-dunyā illā lam yuḥibba l-mawta wa man zahida fihā aḥabba liqā'a mawlāhu*; *Siyar*, X, 476.

⁶³ *lā ta'mal li-tudhkara, ukturn al-ḥasanata kamā taktumu l-sayyī'a*; *Siyar*, X, 476. For more information about the development of Bishr al-Ḥāfi's biography in the classical dictionaries, see Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 154–87.

⁶⁴ *Siyar*, XI, 484–7.

my sustenance, and that calms my soul (*nafs*); I know that only I perform my action (*ʿamal*), and I am occupied with it; I know that my death will come suddenly, and I shall fall upon it; I know that I cannot escape from the eye of God, and so I am modest.⁶⁵

Whoever wakes up with four qualities will be well: Understanding (*tafaqquh*), then reliance upon God (*tawakkul*), then sincerity (*ikhlas*), and then knowledge (*maʿrifah*).⁶⁶

The believer cannot be concealed from five things: God, the Decree (*al-qadāʾ*), sustenance, death, and Satan.⁶⁷

Despite the fact that neither Bishr al-Hāfi nor Ḥatīm al-Aṣamm transmitted *ḥadīth*, the ascetics as a whole are the first category of distinguished Muslims of this generation to have played a modest role in the venture of *ḥadīth* transmission and compilation. Seven of the eighteen ascetics transmitted materials found in at least one of the six canonical Sunnī books, and Mujāhid b. Mūsā al-Khwarazimī's *ḥadīth* can be found in all six of these books save the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdullāh al-Harawī is accorded the honorific Shaykh al-Islām by al-Dhahabī and is reported to have been one of the most important pupils of Ibn Ḥanbal's first major teacher Hushaym b. Bashīr.⁶⁸ Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghawī (d. 317/929) arranged two *juzʾ* of *ḥadīth* from the ascetic Abū Naṣr al-Tammār,⁶⁹ Khalaf b. Tamīm acquired roughly ten thousand *ḥadīth* from Sufyān al-Thawrī's pupils,⁷⁰ and Ibrāhīm al-Ramādī's bizarre transmissions from his companion Ibn ʿUyayna led Ibn Ḥanbal to remark "It is as if the Sufyān from whom Ibrāhīm transmits reports is not Ibn ʿUyayna!"⁷¹ While it is clear from this survey that several ascetics did take an active interest in the transmission of *ḥadīth*, the majority of them expressed little

interest in the temporal universe of *isnād* analysis and textual compilation and preferred to teach timeless truths pertaining to the disciplining of the soul and preparation for the inevitable encounter with the Creator.

V.2.5 Judges, Jurists, and Muftīs

The generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal witnessed a number of legal scholars of a high caliber, several of whom laid the foundations for what would become three of the four schools of Sunnī law. It is somewhat perplexing that al-Dhahabī explicitly identifies only three of the sixteen judges (*qāḍīs*) as jurists,⁷² as one might expect that these professionals would require a degree of erudition in the discipline of jurisprudence to perform their jobs competently.⁷³ The fact that 58% (21) of the jurists transmitted *ḥadīth* found in the 'six books' while a mere 37.5% (6) of the judges did so indicates that the Muslim judges of this period were not the most expert legal minds, although there is too little evidence to venture any sweeping theory on this topic.⁷⁴

The following table provides an overview of the sixteen men whom al-Dhahabī identifies as judges during the first half of the third/ninth century:

Table 5.2: Judges of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*

Name	Date	City ^a	<i>Ḥadīth</i> legacy ^b
1 ʿAbdān ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUthmān	221	Marw (Juzjān)	B (111), ^c M, D, T, N
2 ʿAbdullāh b. Sawwār	228	Basra	N
3 Abū Ḥassān al-Ziyādī	242	Baghdad	None
4 Abū Muṣʿab Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Zuhrī	242	Medina	B (3), ^d M, D, T, N, Q

⁷² These men are Abū Muṣʿab al-Zuhrī (d. 242/856), Bishr b. al-Walīd (d. 238/852-3), and ʿIsā b. Abān (d. 221/836).

⁷³ This figure is to be contrasted with the identification of nine of the twelve *muftīs* as jurists. Is it a coincidence that all three non-jurist *muftīs*—Muḥammad b. Bakr, Muḥammad b. Wahb, and al-Murri—were residents of Damascus?

⁷⁴ This finding is consistent with al-Jāhiz's observation cited above (p. 167) that judges did not need to study *ḥadīth* in order to obtain their jobs.

⁶⁵ *qāla lahu ʿalā mā banayta amraka fī l-tawakkul? qāla ʿalā kḥṣālin arbaʿa: ʿalimtu anna rizqī lā yaʿkuluhu ḡayrī, fa-tmaʿannat nafsī, wa ʿalimtu anna ʿamalī lā yaʿmaluhu ḡayrī, fa-anā mashghūlun bihi wa ʿalimtu anna l-mawta yaʿtī baḡlatan fa-anā ubādīruhu wa ʿalimtu annī lā aḡlū min ʿajni llāhi fa-anā mustahyin minhu; Siyar, XI, 485.*

⁶⁶ *man aṣbaḥa mustaqīmān fī arbaʿin fa-huwa bi-khayrin: al-tafaqquh, thumma l-tawakkul, thumma l-ikhlas, thumma l-maʿrifah; Siyar, XI, 485.*

⁶⁷ *al-muʾminu lā yaghību ʿan khamṣa: ʿan Allāh wa l-qadāʾ wa l-rizq, wa l-mawt wa l-shayṭān; Siyar, XI, 487.*

⁶⁸ *Siyar, XI, 478.* His *ḥadīth* are found in the books of al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Māja.
⁶⁹ *wa qad allaḡa l-Baghawī juzʿayn mim mā ʿindahū ʿan Abī Naṣr al-Tammār; Siyar, X, 574.*

⁷⁰ *Siyar, X, 213.* Ibn Ma'in reports that Khalaf was *ṣadūq*, and Abū Ḥatīm declared him to be *thiqa*.

⁷¹ *kaʿanna Sufyān allādhī yarwī ʿanhu Ibrāhīm ibn Bashshār laysa bi-Ibn ʿUyayna; Siyar, X, 511.*

Table 5.2. (cont.)

Name	Date	City ^a	Hadith legacy ^b
5 Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām	224	Nishapur (Tarsus)	None
6 Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād	240	Basra, Baghdad	None
7 Asad b. al-Furāt b. Sinān	213	Ifriqiyya	None
8 Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī	238	Baghdad	None
9 Ibn Abī l-Aswad, Abū Bakr	223	Basra (Hamadan)	B (14), ^c D, T
10 Ibn al-Rammāh, Abū Muḥammad	234	Nishapur	None
11 Ibn Samā'a, Abū 'Abdullāh	233	Kufa	None
12 'Isā b. Abān	221	Basra	None
13 Khālīd b. Khalī, Abū l-Qāsim	c. 220	Himṣ	B (1), ^f N
14 Muḥammad b. Bakkār b. Bilāl	216	Damascus	None
15 Sulaymān b. Ḥarb	224	Basra (Mecca)	B (133), ^g M, D, T, N, Q
16 Yahyā b. Abī l-Khaṣīb al-Rāzī		Rayy ('Ukbara)	None

^a City in parentheses is the city where the scholar served as *qāḍī* if it is different than his native land.

^b See above, Table 5.1, note a.

^c Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 217 (#31).

^d Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 219 (#39).

^e Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 209 (#11).

^f Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 247 (#131).

^g Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 290 (#250). Sixty-six of these *ḥadīth* came from Ḥammād b. Zayd, and 60 were obtained from Shu'ba.

The prominent judges from this period range from the notorious prosecutor of the *miḥna*, Ibn Abī Duwād, to the master *ḥadīth* scholar Sulaymān b. Ḥarb. 'Abdullāh b. Sawwār of Basra is the only case of a judge who followed in the family profession of his father and grandfather, and it should be noted that his son Sawwār (d. 245/859) succeeded him in this post after his death.⁷⁵ 'Isā b. Abān, Ibn Samā'a, Asad b. al-Furāt, and Bishr b. al-Walīd were pupils of Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, the two most famous pupils of the eponym of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*. Al-Dhahabī identifies

⁷⁵ *Siyar*, X, 434–5.

Abū Muṣ'ab al-Zuhri as an expert in his teacher Mālik's jurisprudence, and both he and the previously mentioned Asad b. al-Furāt are reported to have transmitted recensions of the *Muwatta'*.⁷⁶ The judge of Jūzjān 'Abdān was both an important teacher of al-Bukhārī as well as an admirer of Ibn al-Mubārak, whose books he is reported to have copied with a single pen.⁷⁷ Ibn Abī l-Aswad transmitted a significant amount of material from his maternal uncle 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Mahdī, whose importance in the discipline of *ḥadīth* criticism has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. Finally, Sulaymān b. Ḥarb is remembered primarily for his role in the transmission of *ḥadīth* from his teachers Shu'ba and Ḥammād b. Zayd, and Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī records his amazement at the multitudes of pupils who attended his classes in Baghdad prior to his five-year term as judge in Mecca (214–9/829–833).⁷⁸

The following table of the thirty-six jurists and *muftīs* located in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* demonstrates both the geographical permeation of jurisprudence throughout the Islamic dominions, as well as the significant role played by several jurists in the process of *ḥadīth* transmission during the first half of the third/ninth century.⁷⁹

Table 5.3: Jurists and *Muftīs* of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*

Name	Date	City ^a	Hadith legacy ^a
1 'Abd al-Ghaffār b. Dāwūd	224	Basra, Egypt	B (2), ^b D, N, Q
2 'Abd al-Ḥakam b. 'Abdullāh	237	Egypt	None
3 'Abd al-Malik b. Maslama	224	Basra	None
4 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam al-Mālikī	214	Egypt	N

⁷⁶ Abū Muṣ'ab is the great-great-grandson of the early companion 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Awf and his *Muwatta'* was edited by Bashshār Awwād Ma'rūf and Mahmūd Muḥammad in two volumes (Beirut, 1413/1993).

⁷⁷ *Siyar*, X, 270–2. He is reported also to have transmitted a large amount of *ḥadīth* from his father from the master *ḥadīth* scholar and critic Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj.

⁷⁸ *Siyar*, X, 330–4. Sulaymān studied with Shu'ba during the last two years of his life (158–60/774–6) and then with Ḥammād until the latter's death nineteen years later. Note that al-Dhahabī identifies Sulaymān as a Shaykh al-Islām in the *Siyar* but not in the *Tadhkira*.

⁷⁹ Names in bold are *muftīs*.

Table 5.3. (cont.)

	Name	Date	City ^a	Hadīth legacy ^a
5	'Abdullāh b. Nāfi' al-Šā'igh	206	Medina	M, D, T, N, Q
6	'Abdullāh b. Nāfi' al-Zubayrī	216	Medina	N, Q
7	Abū Mujālid Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn	268		None
8	Abū Muṣ'ab Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr	242	Medina	B (3), M, D, T, N, Q
9	Abū Mushir 'Abd al-A'lā b. Mushir	218	Damascus	B, ^c M, D, T, N, Q
10	Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	241	Baghdad	B, ^d M, D, T, N, Q
11	Aḥmad b. Ḥarb b. Fayrūz	234	Nishapur, Mecca	None
12	'Alī b. 'Aththām al-Kilābī	228	Kufa, Nishapur	M
13	'Alī b. Ma'bad b. Shaddād	218	Raqqā, Egypt	None
14	'Amr al-Nāqid b. Muḥammad	232	Baghdad, Raqqā	B (16), ^e M, D
15	Aṣbagh b. al-Faraj	225	Egypt	B (21), ^f T, N
16	Bishr b. al-Walīd	238	Baghdad	None
17	Ḥarmala b. Yaḥyā al-Tujībī	243	Egypt	M, N, Q
18	Hishām b. 'Ubayd Allāh al-Rāzī	221	Rayy	None
19	al-Humaydī, 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr	219	Mecca	B (33), ^g D, T, N
20	Ḥusayn b. Ḥafṣ b. al-Faḍl	212	Kufa, Isfahan	M, Q
21	Ibn al-Mājishūn, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Abd al-'Azīz	213	Medina	N, Q
22	Ibn Rāhawayh, Iṣḥāq b. Ibrāhīm	238	Nishapur	B (101), ^h M, D, T, N
23	Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh, Abū Shayba	265	Kufa	N, Q
24	Ibrāhīm b. Yūsuf b. Maymūn	239	Balkh	N
25	'Isā b. Abān	221	Basra	None
26	'Isā b. Dīnār al-Ghāfiqī	212	Cordoba	None
27	Ja'far b. Mubashshir al-Thaqafī	234	Baghdad	None
28	Mu'allā b. Manṣūr al-Rāzī	211	Baghdad	M, D, T, Q
29	Muḥammad b. Wahb b. 'Aṭīyya		Damascus	B, ⁱ Q
30	Muḥammad b. Abān al-Sulamī	238	Wāsiṭ	None

Table 5.3. (cont.)

	Name	Date	City ^a	Hadīth legacy ^a
31	Muḥammad b. Bakkār b. Bilāl	216	Damascus	None
32	al-Murrī, Junāda b. Muḥammad	226	Damascus	None
33	Sa'id b. Abī Maryam al-Ḥakam	224	Egypt	B (61), ^j M, D, T, N, Q
34	al-Šūrī, Muḥammad b. al-Mubārak	215	Damascus	B, ^k M, D, T, N, Q
35	al-Wuḥāzī, Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Šāliḥ	222	Damascus	B, ^l M
36	Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī	234	Cordoba	None; a <i>Muwatta'</i>

^a See above, Table 5.1, note a.

^b Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 207 (#5).

^c Sezgin does not identify any *hadīth* which al-Bukhārī heard directly from Abū Mushir in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

^d Sezgin does not identify any *hadīth* which al-Bukhārī heard directly from Ibn Ḥanbal, although he does mention one that was transmitted to al-Bukhārī by Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan; *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 220 (#43).

^e Sezgin identifies one 'Amr b. Muḥammad b. Ḥasan, although no such person with this *nasab* is found in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, according to Ibn Ḥajar (*Taqrīb*, 363). Therefore, I am assuming that this 'Amr b. Muḥammad is al-Nāqid and that Sezgin has made an error; see Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 231 (#79).

^f Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 232 (#82).

^g Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 213 (#19).

^h Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 252 (#144).

ⁱ Muḥammad b. Wahb does not appear to have been a direct teacher of al-Bukhārī.

^j Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 287 (#237).

^k Al-Šūrī does not appear to have been a direct teacher of al-Bukhārī.

^l Al-Wuḥāzī does not appear to have been a direct teacher of al-Bukhārī.

The geographical distribution of these scholars indicates a relatively even dispersion of jurists in the central lands of Egypt and Iraq as well as a handful of men in the "edge" territories of al-Andalus and Iran, many of whom were pupils of one or more of the second/eighth century master jurists Mālik, Abū Yūsuf, and al-Shaybānī.⁸⁰ 'Abdullāh

⁸⁰ For the concept of "edge," see Richard Bulliet, *Islam: The View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). The only expert of Shāfi'i jurisprudence in this generation is Ḥarmala b. Yaḥyā, although it should be remembered that the primary transmitters and compilers of al-Shāfi'i's teachings, Yūsuf b. Yaḥyā

b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam is credited with the foundation of the Mālikī school of law in Egypt according to Ibn Ḥibbān, and Aṣḥab b. al-Faraj was considered by Ibn Ma'īn to be the most knowledgeable scholar of Mālik's opinions.⁸¹ Mālik's legal sessions were continued in Medina after his death by his pupil 'Abdullāh b. Nāfi' al-Ṣā'igh,⁸² and two of his prominent pupils, the *muftī* Ibn al-Mājjishūn and the judge Abū Muṣ'ab, propagated his teachings in his home city. Another significant development during this time was the spread of Mālik's legal teachings as far west as Cordoba due to the efforts of the *muftī* 'Isā b. Dīnār and the most famous transmitter of the *Muwatta'*, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī.⁸³ The importance of Mālik's *Muwatta'* during this period cannot overestimated, although it is interesting to note that only three of the seven transmitters of this text were labeled jurists by al-Dhahabī.⁸⁴

Several prominent students of the founders of the Ḥanafī school of law also flourished during this time.⁸⁵ Al-Dhahabī identifies 'Alī b. Ma'bad al-Shaddād of Egypt and Raqqa as a transmitter of *al-Jāmi' al-kabīr* and *al-Jāmi' al-saghīr* from its compiler Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, and 'Abd al-Ghaffār b. Dāwūd brought his erudition of Ḥanafī jurisprudence and *ḥadīth* from Basra to Egypt.⁸⁶ The *muftī* of Baghdad Mu'allā b. Maṣṣūr al-Rāzī was both a sound transmitter of the teachings of Abū Yūsuf and al-Shaybānī as well as a jurist whose *ḥadīth* were included in all six of the canonical Sunnī

al-Buwayṭī (d. 231/846), al-Rabī' b. Sulaymān (d. 270/884), and Ismā'īl b. Yaḥyā al-Muzanī (d. 264/878) flourished during this time and are included in the thirteenth and fourteenth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Sīyar*, XII, 58–61, 591–2, and 492–8, respectively.

⁸¹ *Sīyar*, X, 220–3 ('Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam); *Sīyar*, X, 656–8 (Aṣḥab). While the former was a pupil of Mālik, Aṣḥab acquired his legal knowledge from the Egyptians Ibn Wahb and Ibn al-Qāsim.

⁸² 'Abdullāh actually inherited the post from Ibn Kināna who had in turn followed Mālik.

⁸³ *The Formation of the Sunnī Schools of Law*, 158. Melchert notes that the next leader of the Mālikī school in al-Andalus was 'Abd al-Malik b. Ḥabīb (d. 238/853), another contemporary of this period in the thirteenth *ṭabaqā*; *Sīyar*, XII, 102–7.

⁸⁴ The three jurist *Muwatta'* transmitters are Abū Muṣ'ab, Asad b. al-Furāt, and Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā. The four remaining transmitters appear to have been *ḥadīth* scholars and include 'Abdullāh b. Yūsuf al-Kalā'ī (d. 218/833), al-Qa'nabī, Suwayd b. Sa'īd (d. 240/854), and Yaḥyā b. 'Abdullāh b. Bukayr (d. 231/845).

⁸⁵ Melchert's argument that the classical Ḥanafī school did not begin until al-Karkhī has been mentioned above in note 3; he does, however, acknowledge the critical significance of the books of al-Shaybānī and Abū Yūsuf during the third/ninth century.

⁸⁶ *Sīyar*, X, 631–2 ('Alī b. Ma'bad) and X, 438–9 ('Abd al-Ghaffār b. Dāwūd).

books, according to al-Dhahabī.⁸⁷ Hishām b. 'Ubayd Allāh had the honor of having al-Shaybānī pass away in his house in Rayy, and al-Wuḥāzī is reported to have accompanied al-Shaybānī to Mecca.⁸⁸ Perhaps the most controversial advocate of Ḥanafī jurisprudence of this age was the *muftī* of Balkh, Ibrāhīm b. Yūsuf, whose quarrel with the master *ḥadīth* scholar Qutayba b. Sa'īd led to the latter's expulsion from Balkh to the village of Baghlūl.⁸⁹ Finally, the judge Bishr b. al-Walīd (d. 238/852–3) is reported to have transmitted materials from his teacher Abū Yūsuf, and the 'jurist of Iraq' 'Isā b. Abān (d. 221/836) was a pupil of al-Shaybānī.⁹⁰

Two individual scholars on this list deserve special mention for the fact that their legal teachings elevated them to the status of eponyms for schools of law. The case of Ibn Ḥanbal will be discussed in detail in the last section of this chapter, and that of Ishāq b. Rāhawayh has been mentioned only briefly in the course of the seven-phase narrative of *ḥadīth* transmission in the third chapter. Ibn Rāhawayh embarked upon an odyssey of *ḥadīth* study in all of the major centers of the Islamic world starting in the year 184/800 and acquired knowledge from such luminaries as Ibn 'Uyayna, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh, Yazīd b. Hārūn, Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Mahdī, and 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī.⁹¹ He is reported to have been in Baghdad in 199/815 with his pupil Muḥammad al-Dhuhlī and to have led the teaching session in the presence of Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ma'īn, and other *ḥadīth* scholars.⁹² Ibn Khuzayma praised Ibn Rāhawayh for his jurisprudence, and al-Dhahabī observed that he was an "Imām of *tafsīr*, leader in jurisprudence, and among the Imāms of *ijtihād*."⁹³ Finally, al-Dhahabī was deeply impressed with Ibn Rāhawayh's extraordinary memory, and observed that he made only two errors in the corpus of seventy-thousand *ḥadīth* that he had memorized.⁹⁴

⁸⁷ *Sīyar*, X, 365–70; *Tadhkira*, I, 277–8. His teachers include Mālik, Abū Yūsuf, Ibn al-Mubārak, al-Layth b. Sa'd, and Hammād b. Zayd.

⁸⁸ *Sīyar*, X, 446–7 ('Ubayd Allāh) and X, 453–6 (al-Wuḥāzī).

⁸⁹ *Sīyar*, XI, 61–2. Note that Ibrāhīm was also a pupil of Mālik.

⁹⁰ *Sīyar*, X, 673–6 (Bishr) and 440 ('Isā).

⁹¹ *Sīyar*, XI, 359.

⁹² *Sīyar*, XI, 381.

⁹³ *Sīyar*, XI, 375.

⁹⁴ *Sīyar*, XI, 379. For a useful introduction to Ibn Rāhawayh's style of jurisprudence, see Susan Spector, "Ḥadīth in the Responses of Ishāq b. Rāhawayh," *Islamic Law and Society*, 8.3 (2001), 407–31.

The contribution of this group of jurists to the global project of *ḥadīth* transmission is striking. The transmissions of Abū Muṣ'ab, Abū Mushir, Ibn Ḥanbal, Mu'allā b. Maṣṣūr, Sa'id b. Abī Maryam, and Muḥammad al-Ṣūrī are found in all six of the canonical Sunnī books, and three additional jurists submitted material to more than half of these books. Either al-Bukhārī or Muslim includes *ḥadīth* from seventeen of these thirty-six scholars, and al-Nasā'ī incorporates material from no fewer than sixteen of them in his *Sunan al-mujtabā*. When we add the results obtained from our analysis of judges to these findings, we find another scholar, Sulaymān b. Ḥarb, whose *ḥadīth* are also found in all six books, as well as another three teachers of al-Bukhārī. This study of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* reveals the significant role of a modest number of prominent legal experts in the transmission of both the juristic teachings of Mālik, Abū Yūsuf, and al-Shaybānī, and the broader venture of *ḥadīth* compilation during the first half of the third/ninth century.

V.2.6 Ḥadīth scholars

The most important category of men of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* for this project, the *ḥadīth* scholars, poses a unique challenge in that there is not a single keyword which one can employ to identify members of this group. Nine of the ten scholars who were mentioned in the eighth *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* in the third chapter of this book are also situated in this generation of the *Siyar*, as are eight master *ḥadīth* critics whom I identified in the previous chapter.⁹⁵ The goal of this section is to identify and analyze the roles of the most important contributors to the global phenomenon of *ḥadīth* transmission and compilation on the basis of al-Dhahabī's qualitative opinions in the *Siyar*, the distribution of an individual scholar's transmissions among the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books,⁹⁶ and the textual legacies of these men.

Al-Dhahabī employs several tantalizing qualitative terms related to *ḥadīth* transmission in the *Siyar* whose meanings were discussed

⁹⁵ The nine men from the *Tadhkira* are Ibn Ḥanbal, Hishām b. 'Ammār, Ibn Ma'īn, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Abū Khaythama, 'Amr al-Fallās, Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Abī Shayba, and Ibn Rāhawayh. The eight master critics include all of the previous men (minus Hishām b. 'Ammār and Ibn Sa'd) as well as Ibn Numayr.

previously in the second chapter.⁹⁶ One hundred and sixty men are identified as *ḥāfiẓ* in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*, and 117 of these individuals are also identified as Imām. The largest concentrations of these *ḥuffāz* are found in Baghdad (48), Basra (42), and Kufa (21), and at least sixteen other cities enjoyed the presence of a dozen or fewer of these high caliber scholars during this period.⁹⁷ It is clear from these findings that the term *ḥāfiẓ* is too broad to be of much assistance to our goal of identifying the most important *ḥadīth* scholars of the age of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibn Ḥanbal, and so it is to other terms that we shall direct our attention.

The first of these terms that is indicative of an elevated status of *ḥadīth* acumen is *ḥujja*, a word that means "proof" or "evidence."⁹⁸ Al-Dhahabī identifies a mere thirty scholars hailing from eight cities with this label, and the following table provides an overview of these men.

Table 5.4: *Hujja Ḥadīth* scholars of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*

	Name	Date	City ^a	<i>Ḥadīth</i> legacy ^a
1	'Abbās b. al-Walīd al-Narsī	237	Basra	B, ^b M, N
2	Abū Ghassān Mālik b. Ismā'īl	219	Kufa	B (25), ^c M, D, T, N, Q
3	Abū Khaythama Zuhayr b. Ḥarb	234	Baghdad	B (12), ^d M, D, N, Q
4	Abū l-Yamān al-Ḥakam b. Nāfi'	221	Ḥimṣ	B (257), ^e M, D, T, N, Q
5	Aḥmad b. 'Abdullāh b. Yūnus	227	Kufa	B (65), ^f M, D, T, N, Q

⁹⁶ See above, II.3. One must bear in mind that the al-Dhahabī explicitly devotes *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* to major *ḥadīth* scholars, whereas *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* includes numerous luminaries who played absolutely no role in this process; it is also quite clear that some terms, such as Shaykh al-Islām, had stricter criteria in the *Tadhkira* than the *Siyar*.

⁹⁷ Note that many scholars spent time in multiple cities, so the sum is greater than 160; these figures should merely be taken as a rough idea as to the number of *ḥuffāz* found in a particular region during this time: Marw (14), Egypt (10), Damascus (7), Nishapur (6), Mecca (6), Rayy (5), Ḥimṣ (4), Samarra (3), Balkh (3), Medina (3), Bukhara (2), Wāsiṭ (2), Harran (2), Maṣṣīṣa (2), Qazvin (2), Mosul (1).

⁹⁸ *wa l-hujjatu burhānūn, wa qila l-hujjatu mā dūf'a bihi l-khaṣm. wa qāla l-Azhārī: al-hujjatu l-wajhu lladhī yakūnu bihi l-zafaru 'inda l-khuṣūma; Lisān al-'arab*, II, 228.

Table 5.4. (cont.)

Name	Date	City ^a	Hadīth legacy ^a
6 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh al-Madīnī	234	Basra, Baghdad	B (294), ^c D, T, N
7 'Alī b. Hujr b. Iyās	244	Marv, Baghdad	B (2), ^b M, T, N
8 'Alī b. al-Ja'd b. 'Ubayd	230	Baghdad	B (13), ⁱ D
9 'Amr al-Nāqid b. Muḥammad	232	Baghdad, Raqqa	B (16), ^j M, D
10 'Amr b. Khālīd b. Farrūkh	229	Egypt	B (21), ^k Q
11 Ḥabbān b. Hilāl al-Baṣrī	216	Basra	B, ^l M, D, T, N, Q
12 Ḥajjāj b. al-Minhāl al-Anmāṭī	217	Basra	B (53), ^m M, D, T, N, Q
13 al-Ḥakam b. Mūsā	232	Baghdad	M, N, Q
14 Hannād b. al-Sarī	243	Kufa	M, D, T, N, Q
15 al-Ḥasan b. al-Rabī'	221	Kufa	B (6), ⁿ M, D, N, Q
16 Ḥibbān b. Mūsā b. Sawwār	233	Marw	B (22), ^o M, T, N
17 al-Ḥusayn b. Hurayth	244	Marw, Qarmisin ^p	B (1), ^q M, D, T, N
18 Ibn Numayr, Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh	234	Kufa	B (15), ^r M, D, T, N, Q
19 Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad b. Sa'd	230	Baghdad	None
20 Khalaf b. Ḥishām b. Tha'lab	229	Baghdad	M, D
21 Mu'allā b. Asad Abū l-Haytham	219	Basra	B (35), ^s M, T, N, Q
22 Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Ammār	242	Mosul	N
23 Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Dūlābī	227	Baghdad	B (9), ^t M, D, T, N, Q
24 Musaddad b. Musarhad	228	Basra	B (381), ^u D, T, N
25 al-Rabī' b. Yaḥyā b. Mīqsam	224	Basra	B (3), ^v D
26 al-Ṣūrī, Muḥammad b. al-Mubārak	215	Damascus	B ^w , M, D, T, N, Q
27 al-Tabūdhakī, Mūsā b. Ismā'il	223	Basra	B (239), ^x M, D, T, N, Q
28 'Ubayd b. Ya'ish al-Maḥāmīlī	229	Kufa	M, N
29 al-Uwaysī, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abdullāh	220?	Medina	B (92), ^y D, T, Q
30 al-Zammī, Yaḥyā b. Yūsuf	229		B (4), ^z Q

^a See above, Table 5.1, note a.^b 'Abbās does not appear to have been a direct teacher of al-Bukhārī.^c Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 257 (#158).^d Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 303 (#293).^e Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 241 (#108). All of Abū l-Yamān's *hadīth* come from Shu'ayb b. Abī Ḥamza; 200 of these are *hadīth* from al-Zuhrī, and 51 come from Abū l-Zinād.^f Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 224 (#59).^g Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 225-6 (#61). Note that 'Alī obtained 196 of these *hadīth* from Ibn 'Uyayna.^h Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 229 (#69).ⁱ Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 227 (#63).^j See above, Table 5.3, note c.^k Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 231 (#77).^l Ḥabbān does not appear to have been a direct teacher of al-Bukhārī.^m Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 240 (#105).ⁿ Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 244 (#121).^o Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 246 (#126).^p A village near Dinawar.^q Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 246 (#128).^r Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 261 (#174, reading Numayr instead of 'Umayr).^s Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 258 (#163).^t Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 274 (#207).^u Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 281 (#225). Musaddad has the distinction of being al-Bukhārī's most popular source; 191 of his *hadīth* come from Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān.^v Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 286 (#233).^w See above, Table 5.3, note k.^x Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 280 (#223).^y Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 206 (#4).^z Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 300 (#283).

The most striking feature of this coterie of scholars is the deep permeation of their *hadīth* transmissions throughout the most prestigious Sunnī *hadīth* collections. Nine of these men contributed to all six of the canonical Sunnī books, five appear in five of the six books, and the materials of an additional four scholars are located in four of these books. Al-Bukhārī obtained over one thousand *hadīth* from Abū l-Yamān, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Musaddad, and al-Tabūdhakī for his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and only one of these thirty scholars, Ibn Sa'd, failed to make it into any of the six canonical books for the very likely reason that he was more interested in the history of *hadīth* transmission than its actual practice, and also because a significant amount of his material came from the "unreliable" transmitter al-Wāqidī.⁹⁹ While we

⁹⁹ This is al-Dhahabī's opinion; al-Mizzī informs us that Abū Dāwūd does include one report from Ibn Sa'd in his *Sunan*, although it is a report from his teacher Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī that "the people say that Qabīṣa b. Waqqāṣ was a *ṣaḥābī*" and not a prophetic *hadīth*; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, XXV, 258.

cannot be certain of the precise intention of al-Dhahabī's term *ḥujja*, it is clear that the thirty men to whom al-Dhahabī affixed this term in *Siyar al-ʿlām al-nubalāʾ* were among the most influential *ḥadīth* transmitters of their day.

The second qualitative term of interest is one that was employed fruitfully in the second and third chapters of this book, namely Shaykh al-Islām. Al-Dhahabī bestows this title upon a mere fifteen of the 345 men of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*, although this is significantly higher than the number of Shuyūkh al-Islām found in the *Tadhkira* for the same period.¹⁰⁰

Table 5.5: Shuyūkh al-Islām of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of the *Siyar*

Name	Date	City ^a	<i>Ḥadīth</i> legacy ^a
1 Abū Qudāma al-Sarakhsī, 'Ubayd Allāh b. Sa'īd	241	Nishapur	B (15), ^b M, N
2 Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī, Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik	227	Basra	B (112), ^c M, D, T, N, Q
3 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	241	Baghdad	B, ^d M, D, T, N, Q
4 'Alī b. 'Aththām al-Kilābī	228	Kufa, Nishapur	M
5 Bishr b. al-Ḥarith al-Ḥāfi	227	Settled Baghdad	None
6 Ibn Numayr, Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh	234	Kufa	B (15), ^e M, D, T, N, Q
7 Ibn Shabbūya, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad	230	Marw, Tarsus	D
8 Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh b. Ḥātim al-Harawī	244	Baghdad	T, Q
9 Khalaf b. Hishām al-Bazzār	229	Baghdad	M, D
10 al-Qa'nabī, 'Abdullāh b. Maslama	221	Basra, Mecca	B (131), ^f M, D, T, N; a <i>Muwatta'</i>

¹⁰⁰ The Shuyūkh al-Islām present in the *Tadhkira* are Ibn Ḥanbal, Hishām b. 'Ammār, and 'Abdullāh b. Sa'īd al-Ashajj. Al-Dhahabī's opinion on Hishām seems to have changed, as he is not called a Shaykh al-Islām in the *Siyar*. Al-Ashajj receives the somewhat unusual sobriquet 'Shaykh of the time (*al-waqt*)' in the *Siyar*, and al-Dhahabī mentions that he saw his one-volume *tafsīr* that is no longer extant; *Siyar*, XII, 182–5; G4S, I, 134. Note that al-Ashajj's *ḥadīth* are found in all six canonical Sunnī books and those of Hishām are found in all but Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

Table 5.5. (cont.)

Name	Date	City ^a	<i>Ḥadīth</i> legacy ^a
11 Qutayba b. Sa'īd al-Balkhī	240	Balkh, Baghlūl	B (304), ^g M, D, T, N, Q
12 Ṣadaqa b. al-Faḍl	223	Marw	B (42) ^h
13 Sulaymān b. Ḥarb al-Azdī	224	Basra, Baghdad, Mecca	B (133), ⁱ M, D, T, N, Q
14 al-Tabūdhakī, Abū Salama Mūsā b. Ismā'il	223	Basra	B (239), ^j M, D, T, N, Q
15 Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā l-Tamīmī	226	Nishapur	B (3), ^k M, T, N

^a See above, Table 5.1, note a.

^b Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 293 (#260).

^c Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 239 (#102). Seventy-eight of these *ḥadīth* come from Shu'ba.

^d See above, Table 5.3, note d.

^e See above, Table 5.4, note r.

^f Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 208 (#9). A total of 101 of these *ḥadīth* come from Mālik.

^g Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 284 (#232).

^h Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 291 (#252).

ⁱ Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 290 (#250). Sulaymān was also found in Table 5.2.

^j Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 280 (#223). Al-Tabūdhakī was also found in Table 5.4.

^k Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 299 (#281). Ibn Ḥajar does not record a Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā b. Bukayr al-Ḥanzalī among al-Bukhārī's teachers, which is the name printed in *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*. I assume that the correct name is Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā b. Bakr al-Tamīmī; see *Taqrib*, 528.

The roles of these fifteen Shuyūkh al-Islām in *ḥadīth* transmission resembles closely those of the men whom al-Dhahabī recognized as *ḥujja*. Six of these scholars contributed material to all six of the canonical Sunnī books and an additional three men are found in at least half of these books. Al-Bukhārī included over 350 *ḥadīth* from Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī, al-Qa'nabī, Sulaymān b. Ḥarb, and over 500 *ḥadīth* from Qutayba b. Sa'īd and al-Tabūdhakī, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Only one Shaykh al-Islām, the ascetic Bishr al-Ḥāfi, did not contribute to the process of *ḥadīth* transmission, and at least one reason for his not having done so was mentioned in our recent discussion of ascetics of this generation.

The final approach towards the task of the identification of the major *ḥadīth* scholars of the first half of the third/ninth century prior to the synthesis of the information present in these charts is that of

textual compilation. Al-Dhahabī mentions nine men who compiled *musnads*, although only fragments of those by al-Ḥumaydī and Ibn Abī Shayba have survived to this day and been published.¹⁰¹ Seven recensions of Mālik's *Muwatta'* were circulated by members of this generation, although two of them were done so by men who were strictly jurists and did not play any role in the greater enterprise of *ḥadīth* transmission.¹⁰² Two books bearing the title *Sunan* were composed during this period by the *ḥujja* Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Dūlābī and the Marwazī Sa'īd b. Maṣṣūr who followed the pious tradition of settling in Mecca.¹⁰³ Two of the earliest *ṭabaqāt* books of *ḥadīth* scholars were also compiled by Khalīfa b. al-Khayyāt and Ibn Sa'd, and another prosopographical work of significance dating to this time is Ibn Abī Khaythama's *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*.¹⁰⁴ The final major *ḥadīth* book of this generation is the enormous *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba, a work whose serious study is a prerequisite for any fair understanding of the nature of Islam during the first two centuries following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ The other seven compilers of *musnads* are Aḥmad b. Manī' of Marw and Baghdad (d. 244/858), Ibn Kāṣib of the Ḥijāz (d. 241/855), Musaddad b. Musarhad of Basra (d. 228/843), Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, Sahl b. Zanjala of Ray and Baghdad (d. 238/852–3), Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Naṣr al-Sūrī of Nishapur (d. 213/828 or 210/825), and the Kufan Yahyā b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥimmānī (d. 228/843). Ibn Ḥajar included the *Musnads* of Musaddad and Aḥmad b. Manī' in his *al-Matālib al-āliya bi-zaw'id al-masānīd al-thamāniya*. None of these books is mentioned by Sezgin in *G.I.S.* Four volumes of Ibn Rāḥawayh's *musnad* have been published recently as well. One could add the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal to this list, although it is really the product of his son 'Abdullāh.

¹⁰² These men are Asad b. al-Furāt and Yahyā l-Laythī, both of whom were discussed in the section devoted to judges, jurists, and *muftīs* in this chapter.

¹⁰³ Al-Dūlābī's *Sunan* was seen by al-Dhahabī; *Siyar*, X, 670–2. Sa'īd b. Maṣṣūr's *Sunan* is discussed below.

¹⁰⁴ We observed in the previous chapter that these latter two works were declared to be among the ten primary sources for *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism by al-Mizzī in the introduction to his *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*.

¹⁰⁵ There are several additional references to notebooks and private collections of *ḥadīth* materials during this period that we must ignore in the interest of brevity. Examples of this sort include Khalaf b. Tamīm's collection of 10,000 "Sufyān al-Thawrī *ḥadīth*," Mu'āwiya b. 'Amr al-Muḥallāb's (d. 214/829) transmission of Zā'ida b. Qudāma's (d. 161/778) *Muṣannaf*, 'Alī b. al-Ja'd's (d. 230/845) collection of 1200 "Shu'ba *ḥadīth*," a "famous *juz*" from Abū l-Jahm al-A'la b. Mūsā (d. 228/843), and a "famous *nuskha* of elevated *ḥadīth*" from Ṭālūt b. 'Abbād (d. 238/852–3); see *Siyar*, X, 212–3, 214–5, 459–68, 525–6; XI, 25–6. Ibn al-Ja'd's collection of Shu'ba *ḥadīth* has been published recently in the first volume of Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghawī, *al-Ja'diyat: ḥadīth 'Alī ibn al-Ja'd al-Jawharī (134–230 H)*, ed. Rif'at Fawzī 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1994).

It is time to synthesize these various tables of *ḥadīth* scholars into a cogent narrative of the world of *ḥadīth* transmission on the eve of the compilation of the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books. The center of this universe was Iraq in general, and Baghdad and Basra in particular. Abū 'Ubayd's observation that *ḥadīth* erudition is located among four scholars—Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn Ma'in, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, and Ibn Abī Shayba—is indicative of the primacy of Iraq in this field of scholarship. Baghdad housed the Shuyūkh al-Islām Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh al-Harawī, Sulaymān b. Ḥarb, and Khalaf b. Hishām, and four additional scholars whose *ḥadīth* is present in all six books elected to make it their new homes.¹⁰⁶ Ibn Sa'd, 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, Ibn Abī Khaythama, Aḥmad b. Manī',¹⁰⁷ Muḥammad al-Dūlābī, and Sahl b. Zanjala all composed *ḥadīth*-related books, many of which have survived, in Baghdad and established the foundation of *ḥadīth* scholarship that was to last well into the Middle Periods of Islamic civilization.

The city of Basra was the only rival of Baghdad in the realm of *ḥadīth* scholarship, and may have been its superior.¹⁰⁸ The scholars of this period built upon the foundation established in the second/eighth century by Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, Ḥammād b. Salama, Ḥammād b. Zayd, and their contemporaries.¹⁰⁹ No fewer than ten Basran scholars contributed to all six of the Sunnī canonical books, and one in particular, al-Tabūdhakī, was praised as both a Shaykh al-Islām and *ḥujja* in the *Siyar*.¹¹⁰ Abū l-Walīd al-Tayālīsī was considered to have some of the most reliable transmissions from his teacher Shu'ba and Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī had access to both

¹⁰⁶ These scholars are Mu'allā b. Maṣṣūr al-Rāzī, Mu'āwiya b. 'Amr, Sa'duwayh, and 'Affān b. Muslim.

¹⁰⁷ His *musnad* is included in Ibn Ḥajar's *al-Matālib al-āliya*; see II, 52–3.

¹⁰⁸ This observation contradicts van Ess's statement that Basra and Kufa suffered from a "brain-drain" by the beginning of the third/ninth century due to the rise of Baghdad; *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, III, 29; these observations by van Ess are cited by Zaman in *Religion and Politics under the early 'Abbāsids*, 161.

¹⁰⁹ Al-Dhahabī identifies ten Imāms of Basra belonging to this generation: Yazīd b. Zuray' (d. 182/798), Ḥammād b. Zayd (d. 179/795), 'Abd al-Wārith b. Sa'īd (d. 180/796), Mu'tamir b. Sulaymān (d. 187/803), 'Abd al-Wāḥid b. Ziyād (d. 176/792), Ja'far b. Sulaymān (d. 178/794), Wuhayb b. Khālīd (d. 165/781), Khālīd b. al-Hārith (d. 186/802), Bishr b. al-Mufaḍḍal (d. 186/802), and Ibn 'Ulayya; see *Siyar*, VIII, 296.

¹¹⁰ *Siyar*, X, 360–5.

Musaddad's *al-Musnad al-kabīr* and *al-Musnad al-ṣaḡīr*.¹¹¹ 'Alī b. al-Madīnī was heir to the critical discipline founded by his teachers Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī, and his contemporary 'Amr b. 'Alī al-Fallās continued this tradition as well. It is interesting that Basran scholars made only a modest textual contribution to the earliest Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature, although its native sons Musaddad and Ibn Sa'd are clear exceptions to this observation.

The Iraqi city of Kufa continued the high standards of *ḥadīth* scholarship that had been established by Sufyān al-Thawrī and his student Wakīf b. al-Jarrāh, among others. Ibn Numayr was awarded the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām by al-Dhahabī and contributed to all six of the canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books. Abū Ghassān, Abū Kurayb, Aḥmad b. Yūnus, and al-Ḥasan b. al-Rabī' also influenced these six books, despite the fact that the first of these was an adherent to *tashayyu'* and that Abū Kurayb acknowledged the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān during the *miḥna*. Ibn Abī Shayba set a new standard of compilation with his massive *Muṣannaf* as well as his *Musnad* and Qur'ānic exegesis, and the somewhat controversial Yahyā b. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Ḥimmānī (d. 228/843) composed what may have been the first *Musnad* of Kufa.¹¹² Despite the long shadow cast by Baghdad and Basra, Kufa's role in *ḥadīth* transmission during the first half of the third/ninth century was impressive, and no serious compiler appears to have been foolish enough to neglect studying with its most prominent teachers.

The regions to the west of Iraq contained surprisingly few high caliber *ḥadīth* scholars.¹¹³ Mecca benefited from its status as a place of pilgrimage and pious retreat and its one native master scholar, al-Ḥumaydī, was augmented by Sulaymān b. Ḥarb, al-Qa'nabī, and

the Khurāsānī Sa'id b. Maṣṣūr. The situation in Medina was even more precarious, as the only major *ḥadīth* scholars in our survey of the *Siyar* were the native sons al-Uwaysī and Abū Muṣ'ab al-Zuhrī. Egypt hosted only one scholar found in all six of the authoritative Sunnī *ḥadīth* books, Sa'id b. Abī Maryam, and two of its other prominent *ḥadīth* scholars, Nu'aym b. Ḥammād and Abū Ṣāliḥ *kātib* al-Layth b. Sa'd (d. 223/838), had a penchant of transmitting suspect material.¹¹⁴ The only bright spot west of Iraq for *ḥadīth* scholarship was Syria, as al-Ṣūṭī, Abū Mushir, and Hishām b. 'Ammār flourished in Damascus and Abū l-Mughīra and Abū l-Yaman put Ḥimṣ on the map for the compilers of the six books. Two other scholars of significance in Syria include the Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Shabūyya in Tarsus and 'Amr b. Abī Salama who settled in Tinnīs and also contributed a small number of *ḥadīth* to all six of the canonical Sunnī compilations.

The relative mediocrity of the lands west of Iraq in the field of *ḥadīth* studies was more than compensated for by the activity in the Eastern lands. Indeed, it is little wonder that five of the six compilers of the canonical *ḥadīth* books hailed from cities east of Rayy. The first master *ḥadīth* scholar of this region in the eyes of al-Dhahabī was the Nishapurian Yahyā b. Yahyā l-Tamīmī, who received the title Shaykh al-Islām, studied with an enormous array of scholars, and whose *ḥadīth* left a deep impact on Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹¹⁵ Ibn Rāhawayh traveled to Iraq in 184/800 to collect material and led a *ḥadīth* session in Baghdad in 199/815 that was attended by no less than Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Ma'in. His material left an indelible mark upon the books of al-Bukhārī, Muslim and al-Nasā'ī. Two other Shuyūkh al-Islām flourished during this time in Nishapur, the Kufan *adīb* 'Alī b. 'Aththām and the 'propagator of the Sunna' Abū Qudāma al-Sarakhsī.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Ibn Hajar includes these books in his massive *al-Maṭālib al-'ālīya*; for the *isnāds* of these texts, see II, 29–37.

¹¹² Yahyā l-Ḥimmānī was declared to be unreliable by Ibn Ḥanbal and reliable by Ibn Ma'in. Ibn 'Adī is reported to have examined Yahyā's *Musnad* and found it to be devoid of suspect *ḥadīth*, and Abū Ḥatīm praised him for the accuracy of his transmission of material from Sufyān al-Thawrī. Nonetheless, none of Yahyā's *ḥadīth* were included in any of the 'six books.' Al-Dhahabī includes a report that Yahyā was of the opinion that Mu'āwiya died a non-Muslim, an opinion that would find sympathy in Kufa and antagonism in the rest of the Islamic world; *Siyar*, X, 526–40.

¹¹³ Note that al-Dhahabī did not include a record of any serious *ḥadīth* scholar from west of Egypt during this period.

¹¹⁴ Several examples of Abū Ṣāliḥ's forgeries have been preserved in the *Siyar*, X, 405–16. One of the more interesting ones for this project is the following: "God chose my Companions over all other people except prophets and messengers and then chose four of my companions. All of my Companions are good—Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī. [God also] chose my community over all other communities;" (*inna llāha iḥtāra aṣḥābī 'alā jamī'i l-'ālamīna mā khalā l-nabīyyīna wa l-mur-salīna wa iḥtāra min aṣḥābī arb'atan wa fi kullī aṣḥābī khayrun: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, wa 'Alī; wa iḥtāra ummatī 'alā sā'iri l-umam; ibid.*, X, 415.

¹¹⁵ *Siyar*, X, 512.

¹¹⁶ This expression is based on the following statement attributed to Ibn Ḥibbān:

Two other Khurasānī scholars both foreshadowed and educated the compilers of the six canonical Sunnī books. Qutayba b. Saʿīd left his homeland of Balkh in 172/788–9 at the age of 23 and was able to study with Mālik b. Anas, Ḥammad b. Zayd, and Ibn al-Mubārak in their twilight years.¹¹⁷ There is a report of his *ḥadīth* session in Baghdad in 216/831, which was attended by Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Maʿīn, as well as another all-night affair during which the young Abū Ḥātim watched Qutayba, Ibn al-Numayr, and Ibn Abī Shayba select (*intakhaba*) the best *ḥadīth* that they had accumulated. There is even a report preserved in the *Sīyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* in which Qutayba explains to an inquisitive student that the *ḥadīth* he has written in red ink are from Ibn Ḥanbal and those which he has in green ink are from Ibn Maʿīn.¹¹⁸ Even Qutayba's altercation with the judge of Balkh, Ibrāhīm b. Yūsuf, to which we already alluded in our discussion of jurists of this period, and his subsequent exile to the town of Baghlūl is a remarkable precursor to al-Bukhārī's forced exile from his native city less than half a century later.

The other scholar whose trajectory foreshadows that of the Eastern scholars who came to dominate the disciplines of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the period immediately following the generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal is Saʿīd b. Maṣṣūr. A native of Marw,¹¹⁹ Saʿīd traveled throughout the lands of Islam in his youth, studied with a multitude of scholars, including Mālik and Ibn ʿUyayna, and ultimately settled in Mecca. In addition to his contributions to all six of the canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books, Saʿīd composed his own book of *Sunan* that was transmitted by a scholar of Herat named Aḥmad b. Najda b. al-ʿUryān.¹²⁰ This book, which appears to be

[Abū Qudāma] *huwa l-ladhi aẓhara l-sunnata bi-Sarakhs wa daʿā l-nāsa ilayhā*; *Sīyar*, X, 406.

¹¹⁷ Al-Dhahabī includes a report in which Qutayba identifies four *ḥuffāz*—Ibn ʿUlayya, ʿAbd al-Wārith b. Saʿīd, Wuhayb b. Khālīd, and Yazīd b. Zurayʿ—all of whom were Basrans and presumably influenced him immensely; *Sīyar*, VIII, 224.

¹¹⁸ *Sīyar*, XI, 17.

¹¹⁹ Two other master *ḥadīth* scholars who lived in Marw during this period were the Shaykh al-Islām Ṣaḍāqa b. al-Faḍl and ʿAlī b. Ḥujr (d. 244/858), the latter of whom spent a large part of his life in Baghdad prior to his return to his hometown.

¹²⁰ A fragment of this book was published by Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-Aʿẓamī as *Kiṭāb al-Sunan li-Saʿīd b. Maṣṣūr* (Dabhl [India]: Majlis-Ilmi, 1967). Another fragment of this book has been edited by Saʿīd b. ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in five volumes as *Sunan Saʿīd ibn Maṣṣūr* (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṣumayʿī, 1993).

similar in structure to the *Muwattaʾ* of Mālik and the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba, included reports from the Prophet Muḥammad, the *ṣaḥāba*, and prominent *tābiʿūn*, and probably was overshadowed rapidly by the 'six books' that consisted solely of prophetic *ḥadīth*.

V.2.7

The goal of this section has been to sketch the religious and intellectual milieu in which Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal engaged in their intense cultivation of *ḥadīth* criticism. The courts of the ʿAbbāsids in Iraq and Ibn Ṭāhir in Nishapur inspired a high culture of poetry, music, dialectic theology, and *belles lettres* that elevated the Arabic language to dizzying heights of eloquence and intellectual sophistication.¹²¹ This was also a period of ascetic experimentation and witnessed some of the earliest seeds of Islamic mysticism.¹²² While many jurists of the age devoted their energies towards the elucidation and propagation of the teaching of Mālik, al-Shaybānī, and Abū Yūsuf, others such as Ibn Rāḥawayh, Abū ʿUbayd, and Ibn Ḥanbal engaged in independent legal reasoning. Many of these scholars also played a major role in *ḥadīth* scholarship in addition to their contributions to the growing body of legal scholarship.

Al-Dhahabī's obsession with the lives of *ḥadīth* scholars is manifest in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of *Sīyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*. I have attempted to isolate the most significant of these erudite men among the hundreds of entries of individuals who played at least a marginal role in the transmission of prophetic material by means of selecting those scholars whom al-Dhahabī praises as *ḥujja* or Shaykh al-Islām, or who themselves compiled books. This process has reduced the field of scholars to a manageable number, the majority of whom either lived or spent significant parts of their lives in Baghdad, Basra, or Kufa. We have observed a great imbalance between the somewhat lackluster state of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the Ḥijāz, Egypt, and Syria and the major accomplishments of eastern scholars such as

¹²¹ This period also witnessed the great translation project of Greek scientific literature into Arabic, as well as the first Arabic philosopher, al-Kindī (d. about 256/870), whose treatise *On First Philosophy* (*Fī l-falsafa l-ūlā*) was dedicated to the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim.

¹²² Note that Dhū l-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 246 or 248/860 or 862), often credited as the first gnostic in Islam, is located in the thirteenth *ṭabaqa* of the *Sīyar* (XI, 532–6).

Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā l-Tamīmī, Ibn Rāḥawayh, Qutayba b. Saʿīd, and Saʿīd b. Maṣṣūr. This analysis of al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* demonstrates the cultural florescence at the courts and in the *ḥadīth* sessions in the mosques during the time of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal that emanated from Iraq to Egypt in the west and Balkh in the east, and which witnessed the compilation of several great textual achievements of Islamic civilization.

V.3 *The miḥna and its impact upon Sunnī ḥadīth scholarship*

It is necessary that we make one last digression prior to the formal introduction of the three scholars and their primary transmitters whose texts I analyze in the second half of this book. The "inquisition" (*miḥna*) set in motion by the caliph al-Ma'mūn (ruled 198–218/813–33) has attracted the attention of several Western scholars over the past century and has achieved an almost mythic status in the literature. After I review briefly the little historical information that has been preserved in the classical Islamic sources about this episode, I shall summarize the main points of Lapidus, Hinds, Nawas, Patton, and Zaman. This section concludes with a reconsideration of the significance of the *miḥna* from the hitherto neglected angle of its impact upon *ḥadīth* scholarship in both the long and short runs of Islamic civilization.

Martin Hinds has assembled the most coherent narrative of the sixteen-to-nineteen-year episode known as the *miḥna* in his article "miḥna" in the new edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.¹²³ Only the origins of the *miḥna* during the last four months of al-Ma'mūn's life (218/833) can be recovered with any clarity, thanks to al-Ṭabarī's inclusion of three caliphal letters explaining the goals of this unusual event in his chronicle under the year 218.¹²⁴ The language of these letters borders on the hysterical, as can be seen in the following two passages:

The Commander of the Faithful considers that these people are the worst of the Muslim community and the chief ones in error, the ones

¹²³ Martin Hinds, "Miḥna," *EI2*, XII, 2–6.

¹²⁴ C. E. Bosworth (translator), *The History of al-Ṭabarī, XXXII: Reunification of the Abbāsid Caliphate* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 199–220; Walter Patton, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1897), 56–61.

who are defective in their belief in the divine unity and who have an imperfect share in the faith. They are vessels of ignorance, banners [or milestones, *a'lām*] of mendaciousness and the tongue of Iblīs, who speaks through his companions and strikes terror into the hearts of his adversaries, the people of God's own religion.¹²⁵

But by their utterances concerning the Qur'ān, these ignorant people have enlarged the breach in their religion and the defect in their trustworthiness; they have made the way easy for the enemy of Islam, and have confessed perversion of the Qur'ānic text and heresy against their own hearts; they have made known and described God's work of creation and His action by that form of description which belongs to God alone and have compared Him with it, whereas it is only His creation that is the fitting subject of comparison.¹²⁶

The original "test" of the *miḥna* was of a strictly theological nature, namely the testimony that the Qur'ān was a created text, an opinion shared by numerous early sectarian groups including the Mu'tazila, Khawārij, most of the Zaydiyya and Murji'a, and many of the Imāmī Shī'a (Rāfiḍa).¹²⁷ Al-Ma'mūn struggled to "prove" the createdness of the Qur'ān by means of numerous Qur'ānic verses in the first and third of his letters,¹²⁸ although his argument was handicapped by the absence of any Qur'ānic verse in which God explicitly created (*khalāqa*) the Qur'ān.¹²⁹ The first group of seven *ḥadīth* scholars subjected to the *miḥna* included both Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Maʿīn, and all of them are reported to have accepted the doctrine of the created Qur'ān in Raqqa without a struggle.¹³⁰ This outcome was not the case with

¹²⁵ *Reunification*, 203. This excerpt is taken from the first of al-Ma'mūn's *miḥna* letters.

¹²⁶ *Reunification*, 208. This passage is from the third letter of al-Ma'mūn which purportedly was read to the second group of scholars that included Ibn Ḥanbal, Qutayba b. Saʿīd, and 'Alī b. al-Ja'd.

¹²⁷ Al-Ash'arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, II, 256. Al-Ash'arī reports another thirteen opinions in this chapter on pages 256–9. Melchert makes the interesting suggestion that the Inquisition should be "identified less with the Mu'tazila than with the nascent Ḥanafī school of law" in his article "The Adversaries of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal," *Arabica* XLIV.2 (1997), 239.

¹²⁸ *Reunification*, 199–204 and 205–9; see especially pp. 201 and 207–8.

¹²⁹ The closest verb to *khalāqa* in relationship to the "creation" of the Qur'ān is *ja'ala* found in the verse "verily We have made it a Qur'ān in the Arabic language" (43:3). Al-Ma'mūn cites this verse in his first and third *miḥna* letters; *Reunification*, 201 and 207.

¹³⁰ The remaining five men are Abū Khaythama, 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Mustamli (d. 224/839), Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dawraqī (d. 246/860), and Ismā'il b. Abī Mas'ūd (death date unknown). These men are names in al-Ma'mūn's brief second letter; *Reunification*, 204–5; Patton, *Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna*, 64.

the second group of men, a large number of whose identities are unclear, and al-Ma'mūn's fourth letter not only cuts through their elusive answers but even threatens several individuals with the sword should they not answer in strict accordance to the Caliph's dogma.¹³¹ Only two men, Ibn Ḥanbal and Muḥammad b. Nūḥ, are reported to have adhered to their rejection of the doctrine of the created Qur'ān after this threatening letter, and were consequently "loaded with fetters" and sent to al-Ma'mūn in Tarsus by Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm.¹³² The fifth, and final, *miḥna* letter arrived shortly after Ibn Ḥanbal's departure and al-Ma'mūn summoned the group of men who had previously passed the test to for further questioning to Tarsus; this trip was aborted near Raqqa at the news of the caliph's death.¹³³

Virtually nothing is known about the *miḥna* during the nine-year reign of al-Mu'taṣim and the five-year one of al-Wāthiq. Al-Ṭabarī is silent with regard to the infamous flogging of Ibn Ḥanbal in either 219/834 or 220/835 by al-Mu'taṣim and his cronies, although it is recorded dutifully by Ibn Ḥanbal's nephew Ḥanbal and son Ṣālih, as well as al-Jāḥiẓ in his epistle on the topic of the createdness of the Qur'ān.¹³⁴ The only other individuals whom al-Mu'taṣim persecuted and whose identities are known are the Egyptians Nu'aym b. Ḥammād and Yūsuf al-Buwayṭī; both men were transported to Baghdad around the year 226/841 where they ultimately died in prison.¹³⁵ Hinds has found evidence of an intensification of the *miḥna* under al-Wāthiq in Egypt, although the primary victim of this affair in Baghdad, Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzā'i, was more likely executed for his botched insurrection than his belief in an uncreated Qur'ān. Even the beating of the master Mālikī scholar Saḥnūn (d. 240/854) in Qayrawan appears to be more a result of local power politics than a serious extension of the *miḥna*. Despite a widespread report that al-Wāthiq abandoned the doctrine of the created Qur'ān after an anonymous Shaykh bested Ibn Abī Duwād in an argument,¹³⁶

¹³¹ "If they do not then recant and repent of their errors, [al-Ma'mūn] will consign them en bloc to the sword, if God wills," *Reunification*, 220.

¹³² *Reunification*, 220-1.

¹³³ *Reunification*, 221-2. Al-Ṭabarī reports that Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm set the party free upon their return to Baghdad.

¹³⁴ These accounts are studied by Cooperson in *Classical Arabic Biography*, 125-8.

¹³⁵ Hinds, "Miḥna", 4.

¹³⁶ This story was discussed briefly above in note seven.

Hinds has argued convincingly that al-Mutawakkil gradually terminated the *miḥna* between the years 234/848 and 237/851.¹³⁷

The predominant trend among Western scholarship has been to interpret this short affair as a watershed moment in Islamic history. The very title of Lapidus' 1975 article, "The Separation of state and religion in the development of early Islamic thought" contains two conceptual categories, namely 'state' and 'religion' whose definitions are far from clear in any period of Islamic civilization and is contradicted by two reports that al-Mutawakkil ordered several prominent *ḥadīth* scholars in the year 234/848-9 to disseminate anti-Mu'tazilī *ḥadīth* in the congregational mosques of Baghdad and Samarrā' after he had brought the *miḥna* to a close.¹³⁸ Hinds' interpretation also ventures into the territory of hyperbole:

[The *miḥna*] brought to a decisive end any notion of a caliphal role in the definition of Islam and it permitted the unchecked development of what in due course would become recognizable as Sunnism. The Mu'tazila and what they stood for was discredited, while populist sentiments and what passed as Prophetic *ḥadīth* were the order of the day. It was now unquestionably the 'ulamā', rather than the caliphs, who were "the legatees of the prophets;" and henceforward it would be they who, armed with this spiritual authority, and at a distance from those who held temporal power, elaborated classical Islam.¹³⁹

This understanding of the *miḥna* not only contradicts the lengthy historical alliance between Sunnī 'ulamā' and temporal Muslim rulers from at least the period of the Seljuqs (fifth/eleventh century) through the modern day, but also suggests insidiously that Islam transformed from a "rational" religion to one of the vulgar "populists" who traded in "what passed for *ḥadīth*" (i.e. spurious goods) and, in a way, stole the role of religious authority from the caliphs. Hinds' lack of appreciation for the massive project of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism,

¹³⁷ Hinds, "Miḥna", 4-5.

¹³⁸ Al-Dhahabī reports that the *ḥadīth* scholar Ibn Abī Shawārib (d. 244/858) was present when al-Mutawakkil forbade dialectic theology (*kalām*) and commanded a group of religious scholars to spread *ḥadīth* in Samarrā'; *Siyar*, XI, 104. He also mentions that al-Mutawakkil commissioned Muṣ'ab b. 'Abdullāh al-Zubayrī, Ishāq b. Abī Isrā'īl, Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdullāh al-Harawī, and the brothers Abū Bakr and 'Uthmān Ibn Abī Shayba to spread *ḥadīth* that "refuted the Mu'tazila and Jahmiyya" in the year 234/848-9; *Siyar*, XI, 125. Al-Dhahabī's source for this report is Ibrāhīm Niṣṭawayh.

¹³⁹ Hinds, "Miḥna", 6.

the elucidation of which is the goal of this book, is not unusual for many Western scholars raised on the theories of Goldziher and Schacht that were mentioned in the first chapter, and these interpretive shortcomings do not in any way diminish the fruits of the labor Hinds undertook to provide what is probably the most accurate narrative of the events of the *mihna* currently in circulation.

A particularly unbalanced presentation of these events is found in the article "The *Mihna* of 218/833 Revisited: An empirical study" by John Nawas.¹⁴⁰ Although the article is concerned fundamentally with the question as to the strategic motives behind al-Ma'mun's decision to undertake the *mihna* in the first place, it fails to offer any form of critique of al-Ma'mun's arguments and authority. For example, Nawas writes:

The traditionists were a threat. Al-Ma'mun saw them sowing the seeds of destruction, menacing for who they were, for what they had come to be within the social fabric, and for the kinds of activities they were carrying out. The sheer numbers of these self-appointed spokesmen for Islam, involved in an enterprise to which they had not been commissioned and without any control from above, made them a force no ruler could afford to ignore. The traditionists were no ordinary men harmlessly busying themselves within the confines of ivory towers but "deluded . . . depraved . . . untrustworthy . . . heretics . . . the tongue of Iblis (the devil) . . . making a pretense of piety and knowledge" in order to "lead the masses astray"—expressions continuously used by the caliph in his *mihna* letters . . .¹⁴¹

Nawas follows this vivid depiction of al-Ma'mun's perception of the "menacing" *hadith* scholars with the rather remarkable assertion that the caliph "ordered the *mihna* in order to acquire the authority of the *shari'a*, to secure for himself and future caliphs unquestioned supremacy on issues of faith."¹⁴² Nowhere does Nawas seek to under-

stand the true nature of the project of the *hadith* scholars or ascertain the validity of al-Ma'mun's accusation that they were seeking political authority at the expense of the caliph. Nor does he address the simple fact that one is hard pressed to find a caliph after 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz (d. 101/720) who devoted serious attention to Islamic law.¹⁴³ If a century of caliphs prior to al-Ma'mun showed little active involvement in the actual articulation of Islamic law,¹⁴⁴ should not pious Muslims have been grateful that at least the "self-appointed spokesmen for Islam," such as *hadith* scholars and jurists, were converting the teachings of the Prophet and first generations into books arranged by legal topics? And who was al-Ma'mun to demand obedience to the caliph when he himself had raised a military insurrection against the caliph al-Amīn, his own brother, who was killed at the hands of his general Tahir? None of these issues is raised by Nawas who, in his enthusiasm to solve the riddle of the *mihna*, overlooks entirely the constructive role of *hadith* scholars in the articulation of Sunnī Islam, and offers little evidence to balance al-Ma'mun's paranoid perspective of these men.¹⁴⁵

primary goal of the *mihna* was to strengthen the caliphal authority is more convincing than the "Mu'tazilite/Shi'ite genre of hypotheses," it must be admitted that al-Ma'mun made a strikingly poor selection of interrogatees, since Nawas was able to find information on merely twenty-eight of the purported "hundreds" of men subjected to the *mihna*. Clearly al-Ma'mun missed many of the best and brightest *hadith* scholars! How Nawas arrives at the number of victims of the *mihna* in the "hundreds" is also a mystery, since he does not offer any source for this figure in either article.

¹⁴³ Ibn Sa'd's entry for 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz is the longest notice in *al-Tabaqat al-kabir* and includes many of his legal opinions; *al-Tabaqat al-kubra*, V, 160–206. See also Crone and Hinds, *God's Caliph*, 73–80.

¹⁴⁴ Crone and Hinds argue for caliphal intervention on legal issues in *God's Caliph*, but they muster little evidence post-'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Aziz; note that the caliph Hishām (ruled 724–43) is mentioned only four times in the entire book. For the "surprisingly nonchalant" attitude of the early 'Abbāsids towards the development of the *shari'a*, see *ibid.*, 80–93.

¹⁴⁵ Note also that Nawas' suggestion that the "daunting task" of establishing standards for the authentication of *hadith* was "shouldered largely by the four emerging schools of jurisprudence" and that the primary tool wielded by these men was consensus (*ijma'*) is puzzling since there is little evidence to suggest that most jurists were concerned with *hadith* criticism in any of the classical sources examined in this book. While it is true that Mālik and especially Ibn Hanbal were involved in *hadith* criticism, it is striking that none of the jurists whom Melchert has identified as founders of the three Eastern *madhāhib* (Ibn Surayj, al-Khallāl, and al-Karkhī) played any discernable role in the disciplines of *hadith* criticism.

¹⁴⁰ John Nawas, "The *Mihna* of 218/833 Revisited: An empirical study," *JAOS* 116.4 (1996), 698–708. Many of the ideas found in this article are also present in Nawas' "A Reexamination of Three Current Explanations for al-Ma'mun's Introduction of the *Mihna*," *IJMES* 26 (1994), 615–29.

¹⁴¹ "The *mihna* of 218/833 revisited," 705–6. Note also Nawas' earlier observation that "Had [the] authority [of the 'ulamā'] continued unchecked, it would eventually have led to a 'house divided' and a caliphal institution adrift. Endowed by God with authority over all that concerned Muslims, it was only a caliph who was entitled to exercise it," "A Reexamination of Three Current Explanations for al-Ma'mun's Introduction of the *Mihna*," 622.

¹⁴² "The *Mihna* of 218/833 Revisited," 708. While al-Nawas' argument that the

This cursory survey of a few somewhat dramatic Western interpretations of the *miḥna* demonstrates vividly the insights of Walter Patton and Muhammad Qasim Zaman. The former, who, over a century ago observed that, "as an attempt to stamp out by force moral convictions, [the *miḥna*] was a failure from the start"¹⁴⁶ evaluated the entire ordeal in the following manner:

Judging from a modern point of view neither side had very strong points; but, judged from a Muslim standpoint, the disputations . . . show that the orthodox¹⁴⁷ had the great argument of the Word of God and the tradition and could wield these as well or better than their opponents.¹⁴⁸

While Patton's sensitive reading of these events may have fallen out of favor during the past three decades, Zaman's careful study of the complex relationships between the caliphate and the religious scholars is a critical contribution to this discussion. Zaman traces the webs of 'Abbāsīd patronage of the "proto-Sunni" elite during this period and observes that

al-Ma'mūn's *Miḥna* ought to be seen not as the culmination of a struggle over religious authority between the caliphs and the 'ulamā', but only as an interregnum which disturbed but did not destroy, and in its failure only reaffirmed, the earlier pattern of state-'ulamā' relations.¹⁴⁹

The sole remaining task in this book related to the *miḥna* is to ascertain the impact of this event upon the greater narrative of Sunni *ḥadīth* scholarship. One of the most striking outcomes of the entire *miḥna* episode is that none of the *ḥadīth* scholars who acknowledged the createdness of the Qur'ān under the threat of caliphal punishment suffered any discernable loss of prestige or integrity in the eyes of their pupils. Four of the scholars who were tried by al-Ma'mūn transmitted *ḥadīth* that are found in all six of the canonical Sunni books,¹⁵⁰ and another eleven contributed material to at least one of

these books.¹⁵¹ Two of the most important *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics of the age, Ibn Ma'in and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī, retained their authoritative status in this discipline despite their lack of endurance in the face of caliphal pressure and intimidation.¹⁵² Finally, it is important to note that the *miḥna* did not even graze Basra, the city we have shown to have been of major significance for *ḥadīth* scholarship during this period, and there is little evidence that it had any success in the Eastern lands from where the greatest Sunni *ḥadīth* scholars were emerging at this time.

While the *miḥna* did not affect the reputations of individual *ḥadīth* scholars, it did have both an immediate positive and negative impact upon this group of men. The positive change was the fame that Ibn Ḥanbal received which paralleled in many ways the elevation of Mālik b. Anas whose prestige increased less than a century earlier in the wake of a sound whipping for his unwillingness to give the oath of allegiance to the caliph al-Manṣūr.¹⁵³ Although most of the

all six books according to Ibn Hajar (*Taqrīb*, 527) *pace* al-Dhahabī, who reports that he contributed *ḥadīth* only to the books of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Abū Dāwūd; *Siyar*, XI, 71.

¹⁵¹ These men are Abū Naṣr al-Tammār (M, N), Abū Khaythama (B, M, D, N, Q), 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Yūnus al-Mustamlī (B), Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dawraqī (M, D, T, Q), 'Alī b. al-Ja'd (B, D), 'Āṣim b. 'Alī al-Wāsiṭī (B, T, Q), al-Ḥasan b. Hammād al-Sajjāda (D, N, Q), Ishāq b. Abī Isrā'īl Ibrāhīm (D, N), Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Harawī (B, N), Muḥammad b. Hātim (M, D), 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar al-Qawāriri (B, M, D, N), and Ibn Ma'in (all six). Nawas alludes to one more scholar whose materials are in one of the six books, but since he does not name these individuals, it is not clear exactly whom he means; my personal hypothesis is that it is Ibn Sa'd, since I have already mentioned in a footnote that al-Mizzī and Ibn Hajar count his non-*ḥadīth* report found in the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd but al-Dhahabī does not.

¹⁵² It is not clear when 'Alī b. al-Madīnī's inquisition took place, but it is certain that he aided the caliph and received a handsome stipend from the chief judge Ibn Abī Duwād; Patton, 87 and *Siyar*, X, 400–2. Al-Dhahabī also disproves an anonymous rumor on the authority of 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal that Ibn Ḥanbal did not transmit any *ḥadīth* from 'Alī after the *miḥna* by the fact that many of 'Alī's *ḥadīth* are found in the *Musnad*; *Siyar*, XI, 59. Note also Hurvitz's wildly-off the mark assertions that "the tragic downfall of Ibn al-Madīnī . . . illustrates how the *miḥna* crushed the intellectual leadership of the Traditionists" and that "after the *miḥna*, his career was in shambles;" Hurvitz, *The Formation of Hanbalism: Piety into Power* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), 151. Given the importance of Ibn al-Madīnī's *ḥadīth* to al-Bukhārī (nearly 300 *ḥadīth* in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*) and his critical opinions to Ibn Abī Hātim, this interpretation is clearly untenable.

¹⁵³ Ibn Sa'd reports this episode on the authority of al-Wāqidi, who may have been an eye-witness to Mālik's beating at the hands of al-Manṣūr's governor Ja'far b. Sulaymān; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, V, 289.

¹⁴⁶ Patton, 124.

¹⁴⁷ By "orthodox" Patton means the *ḥadīth* scholars in general, and Ibn Ḥanbal in particular.

¹⁴⁸ Patton, 125–6.

¹⁴⁹ Zaman, 11.

¹⁵⁰ These four men are Abū Mushir 'Abd al-A'lā, Ibn Ḥanbal, Qutayba b. Sa'īd, and Sa'duwayh according to al-Dhahabī's *Siyar*. Note that Nawas (703) states that there are five such scholars, but neglects to disclose their identities; a perusal of the twenty-eight men reveals that Ibn Ma'in was considered to have material in

fame of both of these men must be credited to their vast learning and the texts that were sculpted from their teachings by their most dedicated pupils,¹⁵⁴ their extraordinary will in the face of torture surely impressed those Muslims who were not particularly interested in the acquisition of copious amounts of *ḥadīth*.

The negative outcome of this brief ordeal was the result of two rival positions with regard to the implications of the dogma that the Qur'ān is uncreated.¹⁵⁵ Al-Dhahabī elucidates the argument that split the Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholars into three camps, two of which were considered by him to be sound, in his entry for 'Alī b. Ḥujr in the *Siyar*.¹⁵⁶

The vast majority of the Imāms, pious ancestors, and succeeding generations are of the opinion that the Qur'ān is the speech of God, sent down (*munazzal*) and uncreated . . . The Jahmiyya, Mu'tazila, [Caliph] al-Ma'mūn, [Judge] Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād, and a group of the speculative theologians and Imāmī Shī'a (Rāfiḍa) are of the opinion that the Qur'ān is the speech of God, sent down, and created . . . then a group (*lā'ifā*) emerged that believed that the Qur'ān was the speech of God, exalted, sent down, and uncreated, but that our enunciations of it are created. In other words, their utterances, voices, writing, and the like [are created]. This was the opinion of Ḥusayn al-Karābīsī and his followers, and was rejected by Ibn Ḥanbal and the Imāms of *ḥadīth*. It is true that Ibn Ḥanbal said "[the adherents of this doctrine] (i.e. the Lafziyya) are Jahmīs!" A group that included Dāwūd al-Zāhirī also said that the Qur'ān is an event (*muḥdath*), and Ibn Ḥanbal labeled them innovators . . . As for al-Bukhārī, one of the greatest and most

intelligent scholars, he said: "I am not of the opinion that our speech of the Qur'ān is created, but rather their (sic) movements, voices, and actions are created; the Qur'ān that is heard, recited, articulated, and written in the books is the uncreated speech of God." Al-Bukhārī composed a book explaining this position entitled *Af'āl al-'ibād*,¹⁵⁷ but a group of scholars who did not understand it rejected it. [These scholars included] al-Dhuhli, Abū Zur'a [al-Rāzī], Abū Ḥatīm [al-Rāzī], and Abū Bakr al-A'yan.¹⁵⁸ Then the Kullābiyya emerged, followed by the Ash'arīs; they argued that the Qur'ān was a self-sufficient concept (*ma'nā*) . . . and they expanded the topics related to this and attached more and more issues and shades (*alwān*) to the point that abandoning [this topic], By God, is what is best for one's faith!

I have already mentioned the tension that this doctrine caused between al-Dhuhli and Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj in Nishapur in the third chapter, and it, like the misunderstanding between the master *ḥadīth* critics in Rayy and al-Bukhārī, appears to have been of little importance to the succeeding generations of scholars who happily copied the books of all of these scholars and worried little about theological hairsplitting with regard to the speech of God.

It has been necessary to address the episode of the *miḥna* in this book due to the historical significance several Western scholars have vested in it. Relatively few of the prominent *ḥadīth* scholars outside of Baghdad whom we have discussed appear to have been targeted, and those who did affirm the createdness of the Qur'ān under obvious coercion maintained their integrity in the eyes of their pupils and successive generations of *ḥadīth* scholars. Even the myriad opinions of *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics Ibn Ma'in and 'Alī b. al-Madīnī have retained their authoritative aura to this day. The only obvious damage caused by the *miḥna* to the *ḥadīth* scholars was the deaths of Abū Mushir, Nu'aym b. Ḥammād, and al-Buwayṭī in prison, as well as the rift described by al-Dhahabī between al-Dhuhli, Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, and Abū Zur'a al-Rāzī on one side and al-Bukhārī and Muslim on the other. This cleavage, however, was short-lived and far easier to bridge than the one that persists to this day between

¹⁵⁴ It is not an exaggeration to state that the *Muwatta'* and the *Musnad* have remained two of the most important religious Sunnī books for the better part of Islamic civilization.

¹⁵⁵ Melchert has suggested a much more serious effect of the *miḥna* affair, namely the split between the *aṣḥāb al-ra'y* and the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* due to the fact that the doctrine of the created Qur'ān was "promulgated by Hanafī jurists in the time of Abū Yūsuf and after his death;" *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 8. He is quite cautious about this suggestion and devotes little more than a paragraph to it. This thesis is also suggested in his article "The Adversaries of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal," although he adds the rather inchoate group of the "semi-rationalists," several of whom he identifies among the Lafziyya, as another target of the wrath of the "traditionalist party." In a similar vein, Hurvitz attributes the split of the "traditionalist camp" into 1) Hanbalī minimalists and 2) Shāfi'īs to the trauma of the *miḥna*; *The Formation of Hanbalism*, 156. His study demonstrates the perils of ignoring the *ḥadīth* scholars who were uninterested in joining any *madhhab* and instead produced some of the most authoritative books of the Sunnī tradition during this time.

¹⁵⁶ *Siyar*, XI, 510–11.

¹⁵⁷ This book has been published: *Khalq af'āl al-'ibād wa-l-radd 'alā al-Jahmiyya wa-aṣḥāb al-ta'īl*, ed. Abū Muhammad al-Salafī and Abū Ḥajar al-Ibyānī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1988).

¹⁵⁸ His remark denigrating al-Bukhārī is the entire reason for al-Dhahabī's excursus at this juncture on the different opinions concerning the nature of the Qur'ān; *Siyar*, XI, 509.

the Sunnī proponents of speculative theology (the Ash'arīs and Mātūrīdīs) and the *ḥadīth*-scholar Sunnīs, like al-Dhahabī, who recommend that the pious Muslim direct his or her energies towards the study of the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and away from speculative theology. It is to be hoped that the *insignificance* of the *miḥna* with respect to *ḥadīth* scholarship has been demonstrated in a convincing manner, and that future research on the first half of the second/ninth century will focus more on the emergence of the Sunnī articulation of Islam in places outside of the palaces of al-Ma'mūn and the pages of al-Ṭabarī's chronicle.

V.4 *Biographical sketches of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Hanbal and their primary transmitter-pupils*

The preceding pages should have convinced even the most skeptical reader of the significance of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Hanbal in the epic venture of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship. Ibn al-Ṣalāh advocates the importance of the books of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Sa'd in categories 28, 63, and 65 of his *Muqaddima*, and al-Dhahabī includes all three of these scholars in the eighth *ṭabaqa* of *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*. Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal were consistently ranked among the most important *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics in the relevant sources I studied in the second chapter, and Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* was considered by al-Mizzī to be one of the ten primary sources of critical opinions. The consensus of the primacy of the critical opinions of Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal was rendered all the more impressive by our prosopographical study of the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* of al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* that revealed the vast network of *ḥadīth* scholars who were their contemporaries and did not achieve their level of erudition in the disciplines of *ḥadīth* criticism. The remaining pages of this chapter provide brief biographical sketches of these three extraordinary scholars, along with the primary transmitter-pupils of their books that I shall be subjecting to a careful examination in the remaining chapters of this study.

V.4.1 *Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Manī' Kātib al-Wāqidi, Husayn b. Fahm, and al-Hārith b. Abī Usāma*

Very little information has survived about Ibn Sa'd's life.¹⁵⁹ He was born around the year 168/784 in Basra and traveled to Baghdad to serve as a scribe for the prominent historian and judge Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi and died there in 230/845. Ibn Sa'd was a *mawlā* either of Banū Hāshim or Banū Zuhra, and is thus called occasionally al-Hāshimī or al-Zuhri. His primary teachers included historians (*akhbārīs*) such as al-Wāqidi, 'Alī b. al-Madā'inī, and Hishām b. al-Kalbī, as well as major *ḥadīth* scholars, including Ibn 'Uyayna, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh, Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī, and 'Affān b. Muslim. He was evaluated by Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī as "truthful" (*yaṣduqu*),¹⁶⁰ classified by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī as being among the "people of virtue and knowledge" (*ahl al-faḍl wa l-'ilm*) as well as "the people of probity" (*ahl al-'adāla*),¹⁶¹ and al-Dhahabī lauded him as no less than a *ḥāfiẓ*, great scholar (*'allāma*), and authority (*ḥujja*).¹⁶² These positive opinions further support the argument in the preceding section regarding the insignificance of the *miḥna* vis-à-vis *ḥadīth* scholarship since Ibn Sa'd was among the first group of seven who assented to al-Ma'mūn's doctrine of the created Qur'ān without protest in 218/833.¹⁶³

Ibn Sa'd's primary contribution to Islamic civilization is unquestionably his book *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, a work which inspired even the erudite al-Dhahabī to remark "whoever looks through [it] is humbled by his knowledge."¹⁶⁴ The first section of the book is concerned

¹⁵⁹ The two primary sources for this information are al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, V, 321–2 and al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, X, 664–6. An exhaustive collection of the classical references to Ibn Sa'd (as well as a list of 99 of his teachers) can be found in Muḥammad Sulamī's edition of the fifth *ṭabaqa* of the *ṣaḥāba* of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, I (Ṭā'if, 1993) 19–58. See also J. W. Fück's article "Ibn Sa'd" in the *EI2*, III, 922–3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *Kutāb al-jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, VII, 262. He also adds "I saw him go to al-Qawāriri and ask him for *ḥadīth*." Note that Ibn Abī Ḥatīm has the incorrect death date (236 instead of 230) for Ibn Sa'd in this entry.

¹⁶¹ *Tārīkh Baghdād*, V, 321.

¹⁶² *Siyar*, X, 664–5.

¹⁶³ One of the only other anecdotes related to Ibn Sa'd preserved in *Tārīkh Baghdād* is that Ibn Hanbal would send a pupil over to his house each Friday to borrow two sections (*juz'ān*) of al-Wāqidi's *ḥadīth* in order to compare them with his own, presumably sound, materials; *Tārīkh Baghdād*, V, 322.

¹⁶⁴ *wa man naẓara fī l-ṭabaqāti khada'a li-'ilmihī*; *Siyar*, X, 665. The only other book

with the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad and is of little importance for this study.¹⁶⁵ The second section consists of 1389 biographies of male *ṣaḥāba* arranged into five classes according to the time of each individual's conversion to Islam, and it is important to note that the text of the fourth and fifth classes has been published only in the past decade.¹⁶⁶ The third section proceeds generation by generation in each of the major Muslim cities, starting with Medina and ending with al-Andalus, and mentions 3513 men. The last section contains 629 biographies of women, most of whom are *ṣaḥāba*, and includes several legal and exegetical opinions of al-Wāqidī regarding feminine topics, such as veiling and beating. The book lacks a formal introduction, but Ibn Sa'd does inform the reader at the beginning of the *ṣaḥāba* section that he has assembled

the names we have acquired of the companions of the Messenger of God among the Muhājirūn, the Anṣār, and others. [It also includes] their sons and followers among the people of *fiqh*, knowledge [of the sunna] (*ʿilm*), and transmission of *ḥadīth*. [It encompasses] that which has reached us concerning their full names, genealogies, *kunyas*, and attributes, generation by generation.¹⁶⁷

Ibn Sa'd follows this brief introduction with *isnāds* from nine prominent teachers whose material was of capital importance for *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. The first seven *isnāds* all begin with al-Wāqidī and trace back to his various Medinan sources, including one that passes through al-Zuhri to ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr. Ibn Sa'd received the *maghāzī* materials of Abū Ma'shar from al-Ḥusayn b. Bahrām (d. 213 or 214/828–9),¹⁶⁸

of Ibn Sa'd's to survive is his *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-ṣaḥīḥ* that remains in a sixth-century manuscript in the Istanbul Archaeology Museum (#435); *GAS*, I, 301.

¹⁶⁵ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, volumes I (*sīra*) and II (*maghāzī*).

¹⁶⁶ The fourth *ṭabaqa* of the *ṣaḥāba* was first published by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Salāmī in 1995 in Ṭāʾif; the fifth one was published by Dr. Muḥammad al-Sulamī in 1993, also in Ṭāʾif. Note that only the 2001 Maktabat al-Khānjī edition has the entire third *ṭabaqa* of *ṣaḥāba* in the fifth volume, and that all figures are based upon this edition. See below for the complicated publishing history of this book.

¹⁶⁷ *tasmiyatu man aḥṣaynā min aṣḥābi rasūli llāhi ﷺ min al-muhājirīna wa l-anṣārī wa ḡharīhim wa man kāna ba'dahum min abnā'ihim wa al-bā'ihim min ahlī l-fiqhi wa l-ʿilmi wa l-riwāyati li-l-ḥadīthi wa mā intahā ilaynā min asmā'ihim wa ansābihim wa kunāhum wa ṣifātihim ṭabaqatan ṭabaqatan; al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 5.

¹⁶⁸ His full name is Abū Ahmad Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Bahrām al-Marrūdhī al-Muʿaddib and he settled in Baghdad. His *ḥadīth* are found in all six of the canonical Sunni books, and Ibn Sa'd evaluated him as *thiqā*; *Sīyar*, X, 216–7; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 165.

those of Mūsā b. ʿUqba from Ismāʿīl b. Abī Uways (d. 216/831),¹⁶⁹ and obtained two recensions of the *maghāzī* materials of Ibn Ishāq.¹⁷⁰ Ibn Sa'd also makes mention of the written materials of ʿAbdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī (d. around 200/815),¹⁷¹ Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, Ma'n b. ʿĪsā (d. 198/814),¹⁷² and Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī¹⁷³ before concluding that

All of these men informed me (*akhbaranī*) of the names of the companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ and those who came after them among the *tābiʿūn* among the people of *fiqh* and who transmitted any *ḥadīth*. I have gathered all of this and have made clear all those whose names I know in their proper places.¹⁷⁴

It has taken nearly a century to arrive at an edition of Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* that is even close to being complete. The first Leiden edition was the product of a veritable “dream team” of

¹⁶⁹ A Medinan scholar and nephew of Mālik b. Anas of the eleventh *ṭabaqa* whom al-Dhahabī remarks is merely *ṣadūq ḥāfiẓ*; *Sīyar*, X, 391–5. His *ḥadīth* are found in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

¹⁷⁰ These recensions are from Ibn Ishāq's pupils Hārūn b. Abī ʿĪsā and Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd (d. 183/799). Little is known about Hārūn except that he was a scribe of Ibn Ishāq and that a single *ḥadīth* of his is found in the *Sunan* of al-Nasāʾī; al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, XXX, 102–3. Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd, a great-grandson of the famous *ṣaḥābi* ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ʿAwf, was a prominent Medinan *ḥadīth* scholar whose transmissions are located in all six of the canonical Sunni books and who moved to Baghdad where he and Hushaym b. Bashīr flourished at the end of their lives; *Sīyar*, VIII, 304–8; *Tadhkira*, 185–6. Ibn Sa'd does not explicitly say he received a book called *al-Maghāzī* from any of these scholars, but it is obvious in his sections of the *ṣaḥāba* that he is making a “critical edition” of sorts in his effort to clarify the names of the men who fought in each of the definitive early Muslim battles. Ibn Sa'd makes explicit reference to Mūsā b. ʿUqba's “book” in the entries of ʿAbdullāh b. Qays b. Ṣayfī and ʿAmr b. Ṭalq b. Zayd (*al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 295) and the “book of Abū Ma'shar” in the entry of Yazīd b. al-Muzayn b. Qays (*ibid.*, III, 277).

¹⁷¹ Ibn Sa'd mentions “the book we wrote (*katabnā*) of al-Anṣārī” in the entry of Thābit b. Khanasā; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 266. Al-Anṣārī's book is also mentioned in the entries of al-Nu'mān b. Mālik and Mālik b. ʿAmr al-Najjārī; *ibid.*, III, 281 and 316.

¹⁷² Al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, I, 242–3. Ma'n was an important pupil of Mālik b. Anas and Abū Ḥatīm preferred him to Ibn Wahb.

¹⁷³ Ibn al-Kalbī's book *Kitāb al-nasab* is explicitly mentioned in the entry of Khawlī b. Abī Khawlī; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 209. Ibn al-Nadīm reports that Ibn Sa'd was a transmitter of this book; *Fihrist*, 111. (My thanks to Professor Wadad al-Qadi for this reference.)

¹⁷⁴ *fa-kullu ha'ulā'ī qad akhbaranī fī tasmiyati aṣḥābi rasūli llāhi ﷺ wa man kāna ba'dahum min al-tābiʿīna min ahlī l-fiqhi wa l-riwāyati li-l-ḥadīth bi-shay'in fa-jamā'tu dhālika kullahu wa bayyantu man amkananī tasmiyatuhu minhum fī mawḍi'ih; al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 5.

German orientalist over the years 1904–40 under the leadership of Edward Sachau. This edition lacked much of the second and third *ṭabaqāt* of *ṣaḥāba*, the entire fourth and fifth *ṭabaqāt* of the *ṣaḥāba* (390 entries), as well as an important section that includes 409 scholars of Medina. This edition was republished without its thorough indices in Beirut (1960–8) under the name of Iḥsān ‘Abbās without any of the missing sections. The lacuna of the Medinan scholars was published by Ziyād Muḥammad Maṣṣūr in Medina in 1983 (and again in 1987), and this material was incorporated into the “disastrous” Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya edition of 1990.¹⁷⁵ The fifth *ṭabaqa* of the *ṣaḥāba* was published in two volumes in 1993 by Muḥammad al-Sulamī and the fourth *ṭabaqa* of *ṣaḥāba* followed two years later thanks to the labors of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Salāmī. The primary edition used for much of this study is the uncritical and unindexed 1995–96 Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī edition that includes everything except the lacunae of the second and third *ṭabaqāt* of the *ṣaḥāba*, the thirty-six entries of the fifth *ṭabaqa* of the *ṣaḥāba*, and a tiny gap in the fifth *ṭabaqa* of Medinan scholars.¹⁷⁶ Finally, Dr. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar has just published the first complete and critical edition of this text under the title *Kūṭab al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* in Cairo in ten volumes with a highly-appreciated index.¹⁷⁷ This authoritative version is based upon five fragmentary manuscripts and the editor has devoted extra care to avoid the numerous orthographical errors that he states plague all of the earlier editions.¹⁷⁸

The life of one of the primary transmitters of Ibn Sa’d’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, Ibn Fahm, is largely unknown.¹⁷⁹ His full name is al-Ḥusayn

¹⁷⁵ This edition has been thoroughly condemned by the editor of the 2001 edition of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, Dr. ‘Alī Muḥammad ‘Umar, in the introduction to his new edition (see note 177).

¹⁷⁶ This lacuna consists of two important Ḥashimīs, namely Ja’far b. Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq and Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī “the Imām” and is found only in the 2001 Cairo edition, VII, 543–5.

¹⁷⁷ This edition was published by Maktabat al-Khānjī in Cairo in 2001; I refer to this edition as TK 2001.

¹⁷⁸ It is curious that he does not mention the Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī edition that I have used in parts of this study.

¹⁷⁹ The primary source for this sketch is *Tārīkh Baghdād*, VIII, 92–3; al-Dhahabī does not add anything to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī’s material in either the *Sīyar* (XIII, 427–8) or the *Tadhkira* (II, 182). Note that none of the published editions of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is based upon the transmission of Ibn Fahm; rather they are all from the recension of al-Ḥārith b. Muḥammad b. Abī Usāma (d. 282/895), whom we shall encounter shortly. This recension was also the only one available to al-Dhahabī and Ibn Ḥajar, among others; “Ibn Sa’d”, *EI*2, III, 922

b. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Fahm al-Baghdādī and he lived from 211/826 until 289/902. Al-Dhahabī describes him as a *ḥāfiẓ*, genealogist, and historian (*akhbārī*) and includes among his teachers Muḥammad b. Sallām al-Jumāhī, Ibn Ma’in, Abū Khaythama and his primary teacher Ibn Sa’d. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī includes the observation that Ibn Fahm was *thiqā* but extremely reluctant to transmit *ḥadīth* to anyone who did not spend a lengthy period of time with him. He also reports that al-Dāraquṭnī declared Ibn Fahm’s transmissions to be worthless (*laysa bi-shay’*), and a report from Qāḍī Aḥmad b. Kāmil quotes Ibn Fahm’s description of his education:

I was a pupil of Ibn Ma’in, from whom I learned *isnād* criticism (*ma’rī-fat al-rijāl*), and Muṣ’ab b. ‘Abdullāh [al-Zubayrī], from whom I learned genealogy, and Abū Khaythama, from whom I obtained Prophetic *ḥadīth* (or his book *al-Musnad*), and al-Ḥasan b. Ḥammād Sajjāda, from whom I obtained *fiqh*.¹⁸⁰

Qāḍī Aḥmad b. Kāmil is one of the few pupils of Ibn Fahm identified by either al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī or al-Dhahabī, and it seems possible that Ibn Fahm may very well have disappeared from the pages of history had it not been for his association with Ibn Sa’d’s *magnum opus*.

The life of the transmitter of the recension of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* that has survived to this day, al-Ḥārith b. Muḥammad b. Abī Usāma (d. 282/895), is nearly as obscure as that of Ibn Fahm.¹⁸¹ Al-Ḥārith is most famous for his unique *musnad*, that was arranged neither on the basis of *ṣaḥāba* nor legal topics (*abwāb*), and must have been a challenge for even the most expert *ḥadīth* scholars.¹⁸² He lived nearly one hundred years, studied with Yazīd b. Hārūn, al-Wāqidī, and ‘Affān b. Muslim, and counted al-Ṭabarī among his pupils. Ibn Ḥibbān include him among the reliable transmitters (*thiqāt*), al-Dāraquṭnī graded him as sincere (*ṣadūq*), and al-Dhahabī scolds Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Azdī for labeling him *ḍa’if*. Al-Ḥārith’s reputation suffered

¹⁸⁰ *Tārīkh Baghdād*, VIII, 93; *Sīyar*, XIII, 428.

¹⁸¹ The information in this biographical sketch comes from al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, VIII, 218–9 and al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar*, XIII, 388–90. The bulk of al-Khaṭīb’s entry concerns al-Ḥārith’s teachers, pupils and correct genealogy.

¹⁸² This *musnad* was later transmitted from al-Ḥārith’s student Abū Bakr b. Khallād (d. 359/970) to the famous *ḥadīth* scholar Abū Nu’aym al-Iṣbahānī; *Sīyar* XVII, 462. Ibn Ḥajar includes a fragment (*muntaqā*) of this recension in *al-Maṭālib al-‘āliya* (II, 58–9).

from his practice of receiving money for *ḥadīth*, and al-Dhahabī pardons him for this practice due to his financial destitution.¹⁸³ Despite this exoneration, al-Dhahabī does include several verses of a poem by Muḥammad b. Khalad al-Marzubān that lambast his willingness to accept a fee for his *ḥadīth*.¹⁸⁴

V.4.2 *Yahyā b. Maʿīn and ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad al-Dūrī*

The vast majority of the information of relevance to the life of Ibn Maʿīn (158/775–233/848) is limited to his pursuit of *ḥadīth* scholarship.¹⁸⁵ Yahyā b. Maʿīn b. ʿAwn b. Ziyād b. Bisṭām was a *mawlā* whose family originated from either Sarakhs or al-Anbār. His father is reported to have been a scribe for a governor of Tabaristan and Rayy named ʿAbdullāh b. Mālīk during the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd and was later promoted to the supervisor of the *kharāj* of Rayy. Ibn Maʿīn is said to have inherited a million and fifty thousand dirhams from his father, all of which he spent in pursuit of his *ḥadīth* studies. Aḥmad Muḥammad Nūr Sayf has identified eight journeys made by Ibn Maʿīn in his quest for *ḥadīth* in his study *Yahyā b. Maʿīn wa kitābuhu l-Tārīkh*.¹⁸⁶ The earliest of these trips was to Kufa and Basra to hear Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ and may have taken place when Ibn Maʿīn was about eighteen years old. He traveled to Basra in 187/803 and heard material from al-Muʿtamir b. Sulaymān a year prior to the latter's death, and to Yemen in 192/808 with Ibn Ḥanbal to study with ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Ṣanʿānī. Ibn Maʿīn is reported to have had a small altercation in Kufa with Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn,

¹⁸³ Al-Dhahabī reports that al-Hārith had six daughters, none of whom he married to a suitor, because both he and the prospective suitors were poor, and he did not wish to increase the number of his dependents; *lī siltu binātīn, aṣgharuhunna bint siltīna sanna mā zawwajtu wāḥidatan minhunna lī-annī faqīrun wa mā jāʿanī illā faqīrun wa kariḥtu an aẓīda fī ʿiyālī*; *Siyar*, XIII, 389. Al-Khaṭīb does not explain why al-Hārith took money for *ḥadīth*, but does mention that Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī told a student who complained of this practice to still seek al-Hārith's *ḥadīth* since he was reliable; *Tārīkh Baghdād*, VIII, 219.

¹⁸⁴ Although Ibn Saʿd is not listed among al-Hārith's teachers by al-Dhahabī, he is mentioned in the fourth verse of this fragment of poetry along with Yazīd [b. Hārūn], al-Wāqidī, Rawḥ [b. ʿUbāda], and al-Qaʿnabī; *Siyar*, XIII, 390.

¹⁸⁵ A thorough biography of Ibn Maʿīn and study of his *Tārīkh* that has proven valuable for these paragraphs is Aḥmad Muḥammad Nūr Sayf, *Yahyā b. Maʿīn wa kitābuhu l-Tārīkh*, I (Mecca, 1979). Useful classical sources consulted for this brief sketch include *Tārīkh Baghdād*, XIV, 177–87 and *Siyar*, XI, 71–96.

¹⁸⁶ Nūr Sayf, I, 52–4.

who did not appreciate being tested by the young traveler, and went to Rayy prior to 200/815–6 to benefit from the erudition of Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd. Ibn Maʿīn's itinerary also included a visit to Wāsiṭ with his disciple ʿAbbās al-Dūrī in order to hear *ḥadīth* from the master scholar Yazīd b. Hārūn. Nūr Sayf reports that Ibn Maʿīn went to Harran and Maṣṣiṣa, and spent two years in Egypt (213–4/828–9) prior to his entry into Damascus and visits to Ḥimṣ (214/829). Ibn Maʿīn's last journey was to Mecca for the pilgrimage, but he died while in Medina, and his body was carried upon the bier of the Prophet out of honor for his lifelong devotion to the purification of the literature concerned with the preservation of prophetic locutions and practices.

There have been few *ḥadīth* scholars who transmitted a smaller percentage of the *ḥadīth* that they accumulated than Ibn Maʿīn. This discrepancy was due partly to the sheer volume of the material that he collected, which was said at his death to have filled thirty satchels (*qimṭar*) and twenty vessels (*ḥubb*).¹⁸⁷ This practice was one of the primary means employed by Ibn Maʿīn for *ḥadīth* criticism, as great numbers of variants of an individual *ḥadīth* text (*matn*) enabled him to detect peculiarities of individual transmitters. Another anecdote that sheds light on Ibn Maʿīn's critical technique and enormous volume of compilation is the report that he copied the unreliable *ṣaḥīfa* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq → Maʿmar → Abān b. Abī ʿAyyāsh → Anas b. Mālīk in order to verify that unscrupulous scholars did not change the problematic “Abān” in the *isnād* to the reliable “Thābit.”¹⁸⁸ There is another report that he heard the *ḥadīth* of Ḥammād b. Salama from eighteen different scholars, and that he preferred the transmission of al-Tabūdhakī to that of the venerable ʿAffān b. Muslim.¹⁸⁹ It seems safe to assume that a large part of Ibn Maʿīn's prestige as a master *ḥadīth*-transmitter critic stemmed from his unparalleled library, as well as his high standards of integrity and probity.

¹⁸⁷ Nūr Sayf, I, 59; *Siyar*, XI, 81. Al-Khaṭīb includes a report from Ibn ʿAdī that Ibn Maʿīn wrote 600,000 *ḥadīth*; *Tārīkh Baghdād*, XIV, 182.

¹⁸⁸ Nūr Sayf, I, 57. This anecdote is to be treated with caution, since there is but a minute number of reports on the authority of Abān b. Abī ʿAyyāsh from Maʿmar in the *Muṣannaf* of ʿAbd al-Razzāq; Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 279–80.

¹⁸⁹ Nūr Sayf, I, 55. This indicates that Ibn Maʿīn had higher standards of criticism than Ibn Saʿd, since the latter made liberal use of ʿAffān's transmission of Ḥammād's materials throughout *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

Ibn Maʿīn left for his pupils the onerous task of compiling his critical opinions into books. At least six men rose to this challenge, and the books of five of them have both survived to this day and been published. The largest amount of material was preserved by his longterm companion ʿAbbās al-Dūrī (d. 271/884–5) who arranged most of the 5414 reports he collated by city and included correspondence between al-Layth b. Saʿd and Mālik b. Anas.¹⁹⁰ The edition of Ibn Muḥriz (death date unknown) is approximately a third of the size of al-Dūrī's book, and similarly lacks any discernable organization.¹⁹¹ Ibn al-Junayd's (d. about 260/874) book consists of 936 reports, many of which overlap with the material present in the previous two texts, and it too lacks any discernable organizational structure.¹⁹² Abū Saʿīd al-Dārimī's (d. 280/893) *Tārīkh*, which was used in the fourth chapter of this book, is slightly larger than Ibn al-Junayd's book, but is loosely arranged alphabetically after the introductory exposition upon the best students of eleven high profile *lābiʿūn*. The book of Ishāq b. Maṣṣūr al-Kawsaj (d. 251/865) has not survived, but it is cited by Ibn Abī Ḥatīm over a thousand times in his *Kitāb al-jarḥ wa l-taʿdīl*.¹⁹³ Finally, the short book of the rather undistinguished Ibn Ṭahmān (d. 284/897) of Baghdad contains a mere 407 reports.¹⁹⁴

Abū l-Faḍl ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad al-Dūrī, the primary transmitter of Ibn Maʿīn's opinions whose *Tārīkh* I examine in the seventh chapter of this book, was a prominent *ḥadīth* scholar during the middle third/ninth century in Baghdad. Al-Dhahabī mentions that his teach-

¹⁹⁰ This book was edited by ʿAbdullāh Aḥmad Ḥasan and published as *Tārīkh* (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1990). A thorough examination of the work's contents indicates both its extremely disorganized nature and its obsession with particularly obscure transmitters. This finding is illustrated vividly by the fact that little over 220 of the [1100] transmitters criticized by Ibn Saʿd are evaluated in this recension, and several hundred men of the former are not evaluated by Ibn Saʿd.

¹⁹¹ *Kitāb maʿrifat al-rijāl ʿan Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn*, ed. Muḥammad Kāmil al-Qaṣṣār (Damascus, 1985). Ibn Muḥriz's full name is Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim and he spent at least eight years with Ibn Maʿīn in Baghdad.

¹⁹² *Suʾalāt Ibn al-Junayd li-Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn*, ed. al-Sayyid Abū l-Muʿaṭī al-Nawwarī and Maḥmūd Muḥammad Khalīl (Beirut, 1990). Ibn al-Junayd's full name is Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdullāh b. al-Junayd al-Khuttalī.

¹⁹³ Nūr Sayf, I, 138. Ibn Abī Ḥatīm also make use regularly of Ibn Abī Khaythama's (d. 279/892) transmission of Ibn Maʿīn's opinions that does not appear to have survived as an independent work.

¹⁹⁴ His full name is Yazīd b. al-Haytham b. Ṭahmān Abū Khālid al-Bādī; the edition was edited by Aḥmad Muḥammad Nūr Sayf under the title *Min kalām Abī Zakariyyā Yaḥyā b. Maʿīn fī l-rijāl* (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿmūn lil-Turāth, 1979).

ers included Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, Yaḥyā b. Abī Bukayr, ʿAffān b. Muslim and that his questions to Ibn Maʿīn concerning *isnād* criticism filled a large tome (*mujallad kabīr*).¹⁹⁵ Al-Dūrī's *ḥadīth* are found in the *Sunan* books of Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasāʾī, and Ibn Māja, and other prominent pupils of his include ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghawī.¹⁹⁶ The inclusion of al-Dūrī's *ḥadīth* in four of the six canonical books becomes all the more remarkable, considering the reports suppressed by al-Dhahabī but found in *Tārīkh Baghdād* that al-Dūrī enjoyed his date-wine (*nabīdh*) until, supposedly, he was convinced one afternoon by a youth that it was unlawful.¹⁹⁷ Precious little information about al-Dūrī has survived in addition to this pious anecdote, although it is clear that he was a public *ḥadīth* scholar and teacher, like al-Ḥarith b. Abī Usāma, and in contrast to the reclusive, historian Ibn Fahm.

V.4.3 Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and his son ʿAbdullāh

The life of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal dominates 181 pages of the twelfth *ṭabaqa* of al-Dhahabī's *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* and has received several recent studies.¹⁹⁸ Most of the discussion in the Western literature concerns the events surrounding the *miḥna*, whereas modern Arabic works tend to devote much space to his legal opinions.¹⁹⁹ The primary focus of this biographical sketch is Ibn Ḥanbal's elevated role in *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism both because of the nature of this study and because Cooperson's judicious study of the various classical accounts of the *miḥna* has exhausted this controversial dimension of his life.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ *Siyar*, XII, 522–3.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ The argument used by the youth was in the form of a dialogue: "What is your opinion concerning *nabīdh*?" he asked. Al-Dūrī replied "It is lawful (*ḥalāl*). The student said "Is it better to have a little *nabīdh* or a lot?" "A little," he replied. The youth said "Oh shaykh, if something that is lawful is better in a small amount than in a large amount, it must be unlawful!" *Tārīkh Baghdād*, XII, 145. This argument is not very sound of course; divorce is lawful, and yet it is clearly favorable for one to practice it as little as possible. In fact, this argument would seem to indicate that date-wine is *makrūh* rather than *ḥarām*.

¹⁹⁸ See for example, Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 107–53 and Nimrod Hurvitz, *The Formation of Hanbalism*, 23–70.

¹⁹⁹ A useful book for this brief sketch has been ʿAbd al-Ghanī Duqr, *Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal: Imām Ahl al-Sunna*. Aʿlām al-Muslimīn: 17 (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1988).

²⁰⁰ Cooperson seeks to answer the thorny question as to whether Ibn Ḥanbal's

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ḥanbal was born in either Khurasan or Baghdad in 164/780–1. His grandfather was a governor of Sarakhs and his father passed away while he was quite young.²⁰¹ His studies of *ḥadīth* began in 179/795, the year that Mālik b. Anas and Ḥammād b. Zayd died and Ibn al-Mubārak left Baghdad; his first teacher may have been the famous Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf.²⁰² Ibn Ḥanbal was a disciple of Hushaym b. Bashīr from 180/796 until the latter's death three years later and wrote over a thousand *ḥadīth* from this venerable shaykh.²⁰³ He traveled to Kufa in 183/799 and acquired a copious amount of material from Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ and Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn.²⁰⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal made at least three journeys to the *ḥadīth* capital Basra in 186/802, 190/806, and 194/810; the first of these was to hear from al-Mu'tamir b. Sulaymān on the eve of his death, and the last one was with the master critic Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān.²⁰⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal's first trip to the Hijāz in 187/802 brought him into contact with Sufyān b. 'Uyayna and al-Shāfi', although he did not arrive there prior to the death of the ascetic al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād.²⁰⁶ His second trip to Arabia, from 197–99/812–15,

release was due to his capitulation to the doctrine of the created Qur'ān or due to the Caliph's fear of killing the pious old scholar. Western scholars such as van Ess and Hinds have favored the capitulation hypothesis on the basis of the anti-Ḥanbalī reports of al-Jāhiz, al-Ya'qūbī, and Ibn al-Murdaqā, but Cooperson demonstrates that the "family" accounts of Ṣāliḥ and Ḥanbal b. Ishāq that Ibn Ḥanbal did not break under pressure are equally, if not more, plausible than those of the first three men listed; see Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 126.

²⁰¹ Cooperson, 109; *Siyar*, 184. Note that his father left him a sweatshop (*dār al-ṣirāz*) and property that provided Ibn Ḥanbal and his family with a source of income; *Siyar*, XI, 319–20.

²⁰² *Siyar*, XI, 306; Duqr, 30. Al-Dhahabī's report is on the authority of 'Abbās al-Dūrī; 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad mentions that his father copied and memorized the books of Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī; *Siyar*, XI, 306.

²⁰³ Patton, 12 (3,000 *ḥadīth* obtained from him); Duqr, 30.

²⁰⁴ Duqr reports that Ibn Ḥanbal traveled to Rayy in 182 to hear from 'Alī b. Mujāhid al-Kābulī, although this seems to contradict the report that he was with Hushaym until the latter's death in 183. Duqr also reports that Ibn Hajar considered 'Alī b. Mujāhid the weakest of Ibn Ḥanbal's teachers. Al-Dhahabī quotes al-Marrūdhī's report that he heard Ibn Ḥanbal state that there was nobody from whom he had written more *ḥadīth* than Wakī'; *Siyar*, XI, 307. Al-Dhahabī also reports that Ibn Ḥanbal studied with Abū Nu'aym in 185; *Siyar*, XI, 308. Whether he spent the years 183–5 in Kufa or made two trips is not clear.

²⁰⁵ Duqr, 32. Ibn Ḥanbal also traveled to Wāsiṭ on this last Basran trip to hear *ḥadīth* from Yazīd b. Hārūn. Al-Dhahabī mentions that Ibn Ḥanbal heard 12,000 reports from 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Mahdī and copied the highly valued books of Ghundar that contained the *ḥadīth* of Shu'ba; *Siyar*, XI, 308.

²⁰⁶ *Siyar*, XI, 183. Duqr makes an error on page 33 in stating that Ibn Ḥanbal

was with his companions Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Rāhawayh and led him all the way to Yemen in order to study with 'Abd al-Razzāq prior to the weakening of the latter's memory in 200/815–6.²⁰⁷ There appears to have been a lull in Ibn Ḥanbal's travels after what must have been an arduous trip back from Ṣan'a' to Baghdad at which time he married 'Abbāsa *bint* al-Faḍl, who bore him Ṣāliḥ in 203/818–9 and then, after her early death, Rayḥāna, who bore him 'Abdullāh in 213/828.²⁰⁸ His last journey may have been to Syria and is dated in a report by al-Marrūdhī to six years after the birth of Ṣāliḥ.²⁰⁹

The period from the return of Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Ma'in from Yemen to Baghdad around the year 200/815 until the former's oath to abandon public teaching in 237/851 was one of intensive *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism. I have mentioned already the sessions of Ibn Rāhawayh and Qutayba b. Sa'īd earlier in this chapter and the names of the scholars subjected to the *miḥna* demonstrates the significance of Baghdad in this process. Both Abū Zur'a and Abū Ḥātim traveled from Rayy to study with Ibn Ḥanbal during this time, and the latter of these two scholars reports that he acquired Ibn Ḥanbal's books on unlawful drinks (*Kutāb al-ashriba*) and faith (*īmān*) during his first visit in 223/838.²¹⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, like his companion Ibn Ma'in, was adamant about acquiring all of his *ḥadīth* in

met with Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd b. Ibrāhīm at this time, since he settled in Baghdad and died in 185; al-Khallāl mentions that they met in Medina in 182, but this was during the time that Ibn Ḥanbal was with Hushaym; *Siyar*, XI, 308.

²⁰⁷ Patton, 16; Duqr, 33; *Siyar*, XI, 215. Al-Dhahabī reports that Ibn Ḥanbal only heard seventy *ḥadīth* from 'Abd al-Razzāq from his memory and that everything else was from his books. 'Abd al-Razzāq was particularly important for the fact that he spent seven years in the presence of Ma'mar b. Rāshid, one of the most prolific transmitters of *ḥadīth* from al-Zuhri, as well as Ibn Jurayj and Sufyān al-Thawri; see Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 62–8. Note another report by al-Dhahabī that Ibn Ḥanbal's entire Yemeni journey lasted only 10 months, a figure which seems rather short by means of premodern travel; *Siyar*, XI, 306.

²⁰⁸ *Siyar*, XI, 185; Duqr, 24–5. Duqr (page 37) mentions that Ibn Ḥanbal went to hear Abū l-Yamān in Himṣ after his journey to Ṣan'a'; it is not clear if he means on the return journey, or at a later date.

²⁰⁹ *Siyar*, XI, 306. Ibn Ḥanbal told al-Marrūdhī: *mā kharajtu ilā l-shāmi illā ba'da mā wulida li Ṣāliḥ, azunnu kāna ibna sittī sinīn ḥīna kharajtu*. There is a report that he went to Tarsus in 237/851 to participate in military raids (*ghazwa*); *Siyar*, XI, 311. Most of these scholars, along with several others are mentioned by Hurvitz; *The Formation of Hanbalism*, 44–52. Hurvitz's comment that Ibn Mahdī was Ibn Ḥanbal's "only teacher from those years who belonged to the intellectual elite of the Traditionist milieu" (p. 48) is contradicted by his own statement a few pages later that the four leaders of the *ḥadīth* scholars were Ibn 'Uyayna, Wakī', Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, and Ibn Mahdī (p. 55), all of whom were very important teachers of Ibn Ḥanbal.

²¹⁰ *Siyar*, XI, 301.

writing and in not relying solely upon the faculty of memory unless he was teaching fewer than a hundred *ḥadīth*.²¹¹ Despite this devotion to written materials, Ibn Ḥanbal left the task of the compilation of his massive *Musnad* to his son ‘Abdullāh, and appears to have left a few short books of his own.²¹² As for Ibn Ḥanbal’s legal opinions, the task of organizing this material from a long list of students fell to Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923), the founder of the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence, and compiler of the now lost *al-Jāmi‘ li-‘ulūm Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*.²¹³

The *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal remains one of the most challenging texts in the genre of *ḥadīth* literature due to its volume and the absence of any thematic organization. Al-Dhahabī traces the transmission of this book from ‘Abdullāh b. Aḥmad to Abū Bakr b. Mālik al-Qaṭīrī to the preacher (*al-wā‘iz*) Abū ‘Alī b. al-Mudhhab to Abū l-Qāsim Hibat Allāh b. Muḥammad to numerous illustrious scholars, such as Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn ‘Asākir, and observes that none of the three transmitters after ‘Abdullāh was a particularly gifted *ḥadīth* scholar.²¹⁴ He also offers encouraging words for a scholar to rearrange the contents of the book so as to facilitate its usage, to correct orthographic errors, and clarify the quality of many transmitters, and states “had I not been incapable of this due to the weakness of my vision, were my intention not hollow, nor my journey (death?) close, I would have done this.”²¹⁵ This task was partially completed by Aḥmad al-Bannā, who arranged the contents of

²¹¹ *Siyar*, XI, 213.

²¹² Al-Dhahabī argues that both *al-Risāla fī l-ṣalāt* and *al-Radd ‘alā l-zanādiqa* are forged and were not the works of Ibn Ḥanbal; *Siyar*, XI, 287. Furthermore, he argues that the “100,000-*ḥadīth tafsīr*” attributed to him never existed, as there are virtually no records of it and it would be impossible for something so large to disappear without a trace in Baghdad; *Siyar*, XI, 328 and XIII, 522. He does seem to agree that the following books were products of Ibn Ḥanbal with a little editorial assistance from his son ‘Abdullāh and his son’s pupil Abū Bakr al-Qaṭīrī: *al-Nāsikh wa l-mansūkh*, *al-Tārīkh*, *Ḥadīth Shu‘ba*, *al-Muqaddim wa l-mu‘akhkhir fī l-Qur‘ān*, *Jawābāt al-Qur‘ān*, *al-Manāsik*, *Nafy al-tashbīh*, *al-Imāma*, *al-Zuhd*, and *Faḍā’il al-ṣaḥāba*; *Siyar*, XI, 327 and 330. See also GAS, 502–9.

²¹³ Melchert, *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 143–55; GAS, I, 512. Al-Dhahabī records a list of al-Khallāl’s teachers near the end of Ibn Ḥanbal’s entry; *Siyar*, XI, 330–1; see also al-Khallāl’s entry in the *Siyar*, XIV, 298.

²¹⁴ *Siyar*, XIII, 524. He also remarks that Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī obtained much of the *Musnad* from Abū ‘Alī b. al-Ṣawwāf (as well as al-Qaṭīrī) and that al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī also received it from al-Qaṭīrī.

²¹⁵ *wa law lā annī qad ‘ajiztu ‘an dhālika li-dāfi l-baṣari, wa ‘adami l-niyyati, wa qurbi l-raḥili, la-‘amiltu fī dhālika*; *Siyar*, XIII, 525.

the *Musnad* according to legal topics in order to facilitate its use,²¹⁶ although the first thorough, critical edition complete with *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism for the thousands of men in the *isnāds* was not completed by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākīr prior to his death. This project has just been completed under the editorial guidance of Shu‘ayb al-Arnā‘ūt and ‘Ādil Murshad in fifty volumes and this beautiful new edition of the *Musnad* should greatly facilitate research of this most challenging monument of Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature.²¹⁷

One last significant question that must be addressed is whether Ibn Ḥanbal was considered a jurist in the eyes of his peers and pupils. Susan Sectorsky and Wael Hallaq have argued that Ibn Ḥanbal’s legal acumen was a later invention, largely on the basis of the fact that scholars such as Ibn Qutayba, al-Ṭabarī, and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr did not identify him as a jurist.²¹⁸ Sectorsky and Hallaq seem to have overlooked some critical evidence that contradicts this thesis, for al-Tirmidhī includes many of Ibn Ḥanbal’s legal opinions in his canonical *ḥadīth* book,²¹⁹ Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī’s collection of legal inquiries has been published by Rashīd Riḍā at the beginning of this past century (part of which is even translated by Sectorsky), and the esteemed jurist Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī (d. 294/907) regularly includes Ibn Ḥanbal’s opinions in his *Ikhtilāf*

²¹⁶ Aḥmad al-Bannā, *al-Fath al-rabbānī* second edition, 24 vols. (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, no date).

²¹⁷ Another text that facilitates research with the cumbersome *Musnad* is the recently published *Aṭrāf Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal al-musammā Iṭrāf al-musnad al-muṭālī bi-ṭrāf al-musnad al-Hanbalī*, ed. Zuhayr b. Nāṣir (Beirut and Damascus, 1993) by Ibn Hajar. This book collates all of the *ḥadīth* of identical *matn* that share an identical *ṣaḥābī* and *ṭabī‘ī* in the *isnād* in one place, and thus reduces the number of *ḥadīth* from about 30,000 to 12,787.

²¹⁸ Susan Sectorsky, *Chapters on Marriage and Divorce: Responses of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Rāhawayh*, 2 and Wael Hallaq, *Authority, Continuity, and Change in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 40. These are curious sources to cite as evidence that Ibn Ḥanbal was not a jurist, since both Ibn Qutayba and al-Ṭabarī had sour relations with the adherents of the teachings of Ibn Ḥanbal, and Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr actually cites Ibn Ḥanbal’s legal opinions regularly in his massive work *al-Istidhāk*. Note also that al-Dhahabī includes a report that neither al-Ṭabarī nor Ibn Surayj considered Ibn Qutayba’s *fiqh* to be of any value (*laysa bi-shay’*) and that one should only rely upon him for his impressive linguistic erudition; *Siyar*, XIII, 301.

²¹⁹ For example, al-Tirmidhī regularly quotes Ibn Ḥanbal’s opinions alongside those of Ibn Rāhawayh, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī, and Sufyān al-Thawrī in his *Jāmi‘*. Al-Tirmidhī’s source for Ibn Ḥanbal’s and Ibn Rāhawayh’s legal opinions is none other than Ishāq b. Maṣṣūr al-Kawsaj, the same source used by Sectorsky in chapter 4 of *Chapters on Marriage and Divorce*; see al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, V, 737.

al-ʿulamāʾ alongside those of Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Shāfiʿī, Ibn Rāhawayh, and others.²²⁰ While al-Jassās's abridgement of al-Ṭahāwī's *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahāʾ* does not appear to include any opinions of Ibn Ḥanbal (something that is not surprising given the lack of respect shown to Abū Ḥanīfa by Ibn Ḥanbal and most *ḥadīth* scholars of this age),²²¹ Ibn al-Mundhir's (d. 318/930) *al-Ishrāf ʿalā madhāhib ahl al-ʿilm* does include the opinions of Ibn Ḥanbal, along with a host of other authorities.²²² It does appear untenable, at least on the basis of this brief survey of early *ikhtilāf al-fuqahāʾ* books, to argue that Ibn Ḥanbal was not a respected jurist in the third/ninth century, although it is probably true that his fame rested more heavily upon his *ḥadīth* erudition than that of his legal opinions.

A few words should be said about ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, a man whose life was greatly overshadowed by his illustrious father. I have already remarked that ʿAbdullāh was born in 213/828 and that he transmitted the entire *Musnad* from his father, as well as the *Kitāb al-zuhd*. The *Kitāb al-ʿilal* of his father's critical opinions is clearly a work of his own from the fact that nearly every report begins with the expression "I asked my father."²²³ Both al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and al-Dhahabī include substantial lists of teachers with whom ʿAbdullāh studied in addition to his father, among whom we find Ibn Maʿīn, Abū Khaythama, Ibn Abī Shayba, and Sufyān b. Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāh (d. 247/861).²²⁴ His pupils include al-Nasāʾī, Abū l-Qāsim

²²⁰ This short work was first edited by al-Sayyid Ṣubḥī al-Sāmarrāʾī and published by ʿĀlam al-Kutub in Beirut (1985). Hallaq includes al-Marwazī among his "very distinguished group of jurists" known as the "four Muḥammads;" see *Authority, Continuity, and Change in Islamic Law*, 59. Note that al-Marwazī, like al-Tirmidhī, never refers to Abū Ḥanīfa, Shaybānī, or Abū Yūsuf by name, but instead uses the anonymous term *aṣḥāb al-raʾy*.

²²¹ This topic is addressed in some detail below in chapter VIII.4. See also Melchert, "The Adversaries of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal." Note that he refers to Ibn Ḥanbal as a participant in the field of jurisprudence, despite the acknowledgement that he only based law on *ḥadīth* and the legal opinions of the Companions and Successors; *ibid.*, 235. Presumably one could add also the Qurʾān to this list of sources.

²²² Ibn al-Mundhir, *al-Ishrāf ʿalā madhāhib ahl al-ʿilm* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993). Ibn al-Mundhir al-Naysābūrī is also included among the "very distinguished group of jurists" known as the "four Muḥammads" according to Hallaq; see *Authority, Continuity, and Change in Islamic Law*, 59. The remaining two Muḥammads are al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Khuzayma, the latter of whom almost certainly must have considered Ibn Ḥanbal a jurist as well as a master *ḥadīth* scholar as well.

²²³ See also *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 140 for a similar argument.

²²⁴ *Tārīkh Baghdād*, IX, 375; *Siyar*, XIII, 517. Al-Dhahabī includes a list of a large

al-Baghawī, Ibn Šāʿid, and al-Ṭabarānī, as well as the important transmitters of the *Musnad* Abū ʿAlī al-Šawwāf and Abū Bakr al-Qaṭīʿī, and the indefatigable compiler of Ibn Ḥanbal's religious opinions Abū Bakr al-Khallāl. Little else has been preserved about ʿAbdullāh's life beyond his dedication to the transmission of his father's erudition, and it seems safe to speculate that he lived quietly in the company of *ḥadīth* scholars and free from the abuses his father received during the *miḥna*.²²⁵

V.5 Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to shed light upon the religious and cultural setting of the three prominent *ḥadīth* scholars whose works I shall be analyzing in the second part of this book. The primary source was the rich *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* of al-Dhahabī and I classified most of the 345 men found in the eleventh and twelfth *ṭabaqāt* into five groups: 1) rulers, poets, and litterateurs; 2) theologians; 3) ascetics; 4) judges, jurists, and *muftīs*; 5) *ḥadīth* scholars. Despite the presence of extraordinary figures in all five of these groups, only the fourth and fifth ones included a significant number of *ḥadīth* scholars. I determined the most significant *ḥadīth* scholars of the lot on the basis of al-Dhahabī's critical remarks and their own efforts at compilation. The portrait of the state of the field of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the first half of the third/ninth century that flourished without serious interruption from the largely ineffective *miḥna*, is of one that was anchored in Baghdad, Basra, and Kufa and strongly supported by the Eastern lands of Iran and Central Asia. Finally, it is clear from this chapter and the preceding one that Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal all played a significant role in the global process of *ḥadīth* scholarship, especially with regard to *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism and textual compilation.

number of *shuyūkh* from whom ʿAbdullāh transmitted *ḥadīth* among his additions to the *Musnad* of his father; *ibid.*, XIII, 518–20.

²²⁵ There is a report found only in Ibn Abī Yaʿlā's *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila* that ʿAbdullāh accepted a judgeship at the end of his life in Khurasan; see *The Formation of the Sunni Schools of Law*, 140. It is curious that this post is mentioned neither by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī nor by al-Dhahabī.

PART TWO

THE THREE PRINCIPLES OF *HADĪTH*-SCHOLAR
SUNNĪ ISLAM: *ṢAHĀBA*, *HADĪTH*-TRANSMITTER
CRITICISM, AND HISTORY

CHAPTER SIX

THE *ṢAḤĀBA* IN CLASSICAL MUSLIM THEORY AND PRACTICE

VI.1

I proposed in the introduction to this book that the three salient pillars upon which the Sunnī Islam of the *ḥadīth* scholars stands are the assertion of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba*, the broad consensus among the master *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics regarding the reliability of several hundred *ḥadīth*-transmitters, and the implicit historical vision of the five-generation network of these men. This chapter analyzes both the theoretical and practical aspects of the first of these three pillars, namely the *ṣaḥāba*. It articulates clearly the historical challenge faced by Muslims due to the deep involvement of the first generation of Muslims on opposing sides in the civil strife that fragmented the nascent Muslim community from 11–40/632–61, and analyzes interpretations of these events advanced by the Imāmī Shīʿa, Zaydiyya/Baghdādī Muʿtazila, and the Sunnīs over the course of the third/ninth century. The findings of this chapter suggests that the fundamental divisions between the Shīʿa and Sunnīs arose out of irreconcilable *historiographies* rather than theologies, and that the position advocated by the Sunnīs was due primarily to the catalytic role of the *ṣaḥāba* in *ḥadīth* transmission rather than the widely circulated reports extolling their individual merits (*faḍāʾil*).

While western scholarship has not ignored the significance of the *ṣaḥāba* in the development of Islam, it has done relatively little to elucidate the historical and didactic roles of individual actors. The recent entry for the *ṣaḥāba* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* is symptomatic of this problem, as it opens with the statement that “Ṣaḥāba . . . are the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad, who in many respects are key figures in the early history of Islam,” concludes a mere page and a half later with a brief (and outdated) description of Ibn Saʿd’s classification of them, and mentions very few secondary works in the bibliography.¹ The *ṣaḥāba* are mentioned only in connection with the

¹ M. Muranyi, “Ṣaḥāba,” *EI2*, VIII, 827–9. This volume was published in 1994.

Rāfiḍa (Imāmī Shīʿa) in Montgomery Watt's *Formative Period of Islamic Thought* and are absent from his discussion of "The Triumph of Sunnism."² Noth and Conrad mention that the

theory of the superiority of the Companions of the Prophet . . . appears in the *futūḥ* traditions, in traditions on the *fitna*, in traditions on cities, in reports on administration, law, and the caliphate, and indeed in practically all areas covered by the early transmitters

but, surprisingly, they do not consider the *ṣaḥāba* to be either a major or minor theme in early Islamic historiography.³ Juynboll discusses the question of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* in both *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature* and *Muslim Tradition* and asserts in the latter work that

the Companions, as a class of people, were collectively placed on a level higher than that of any other, later generations and whoever casts, or tries to cast, the slightest blemish on the reputation of a single Companion runs the risk of being ostracized.⁴

Juynboll credits the doctrine of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* to Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and thus dates it to the final decades of the third/ninth century and the first decades of the following one.⁵ The

² Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, 159–161.

³ Noth and Conrad, *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A source-critical study*, translated by Michael Bonner (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1994), 22. Of some interest for this study is the inclusion of the *fitna* (the killing of ʿUthmān, Battle of the Camel, and Battle of Siffin) among the seven primary themes; this means, according to the theories of Noth and Conrad, that these events probably have some historical veracity (pp. 33–5). However, they classify the role of the *ṣaḥāba* in the newly founded cities to be a secondary theme (pp. 54–5), which, according to their definition, means that "this new information is either literary embellishment or pure fiction" (p. 27). The *ṣaḥāba* do not receive the status of "theme" in Donner's *Narratives of Islamic Origins* (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1998) either, although *fitna* is classified under the "themes of leadership" in a more extensive manner than the three battles mentioned above by Noth and Conrad (p. 189). Donner's *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981) takes the military roles of the *ṣaḥāba* seriously, although given the subject matter of the book, one would not expect to find information about their roles off of the battlefield.

⁴ Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 191.

⁵ *Muslim Tradition*, 194–5. Both Juynboll and Dickinson credit the *Taqdīm* of Ibn Abī Ḥātim with being the earliest source in which this concept is found; Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 79 and Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Hadīth Criticism*, 82. Neither one of them mentions al-Wāqidi's definition of a *ṣaḥābī* preserved in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Tabaqāt al-kabīr* that we shall discuss below and that predates Abū Ḥātim's opinion by a century.

bulk of his efforts, however, concern the probity of Abū Hurayra and arose from his investigation into the modern Egyptian controversy concerning this uniquely prolific *ṣaḥābī* that followed the publications of Abū Rayya in the first half of the past century.⁶ Muḥammad Ṣiddīqī observes that "the trustworthiness of the great mass of *ḥadīths*" depends upon the "reliability and honesty" of the *ṣaḥāba* and he includes a useful summary of Ibn al-Jawzī's list of 123 men and women who transmitted twenty or more *ḥadīth*.⁷ Daniel Brown eloquently describes the *ṣaḥāba* as "an indispensable link in the epistemological chain between the Prophet and the rest of humanity" and observes that their collective probity is one of the three topics that "dominate the Muslim discussion of *ḥadīth* authenticity" from the time of Sayyid Aḥmad Khān (1817–98) until the present.⁸ Finally, Shīʿī attitudes towards the *ṣaḥāba* have been clarified by two articles from Etan Kohlberg⁹ as well as the first several chapters of Jafri's *Origins and Early Development of Shīʿa Islam*, although the latter's interpretation of the event of the Saqīfa as "inextricably connected with the emergence of the Shīʿī viewpoint" seems somewhat tendentious at best.¹⁰

⁶ *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature*, 62–99. It will become apparent that Juynboll's suggestion that "once the unreliability of one Companion . . . had been established, the entire tradition criticism and, consequently, the tradition literature is put on an unfirm basis" (p. 56) is a little hyperbolic given the relatively small number of *ṣaḥāba* who played a meaningful role in *ḥadīth* transmission; the material of dozens of "controversial" *ṣaḥāba* could be jettisoned without having a noticeable impact on the literature overall. Note that al-Ṭabarānī's 30,000-*ḥadīth al-Muʿjam al-kabīr* mentioned in the third chapter does not have any *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayra, the most prolific by far of all *ṣaḥāba*; clearly there is sufficient material for the elucidation of Islamic practice even if a few major *ṣaḥāba* were ignored.

⁷ Ṣiddīqī, *Hadīth Literature*, 14–18. Ibn al-Jawzī's list is found in his *Talqīh*, a one volume book filled with lists of names of all sort of historically interesting people and devoid of any substantive biographical information.

⁸ Daniel Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, 85. The other two major topics of discussion are the manner of *ḥadīth* transmission and the "efficacy of *isnād* criticism."

⁹ "Some Zaydī views on the Companions of the Prophet," *BSOAS*, 39/1 (1976) 91–8 and "Some Imāmī Shīʿī views of the *ṣaḥāba*," *JSAI*, 5 (1984) 143–75. These articles are discussed below, VI.3.2.

¹⁰ S. Husain M. Jafri, *Origins and Early Development of Shīʿa Islam* (London, 1979), 27. Jafri is particularly critical of Ibn Sa'd's treatment of the Saqīfa in his entry on Abū Bakr and argues that "the entire section is carefully planned to show that Abū Bakr . . . was beyond doubt the only deserving candidate to succeed the dying Prophet" (p. 34). Nowhere does Jafri mention that Abū Bakr is the *forty-sixth* entry among the Muhājirūn at Badr while ʿAlī, due to his genealogical proximity to the Prophet is the *third* (after the Prophet himself and his uncle Ḥamza). In reality, Abū

The tranquil state of benign neglect of the *ṣaḥāba* in Western scholarship was shattered by the arrival of Wilferd Madelung's *The Succession to Muḥammad* in 1997.¹¹ Madelung's careful reading of al-Ṭabarī's history, the *Ansāb al-ashrāf* of al-Balādhūrī (d. 279/892), and *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* of Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258), among other works, resulted in one of the first narratives of the history of the first five caliphs in recent memory to include copious prosopographical material regarding the lives of over a hundred early Muslims. Madelung's purported 'pro-ʿAlī' interpretation of the events of the first half-century of Islam, however, has been severely criticized by reviewers such as Patricia Crone and Yassin Dutton.¹² Unfortunately, these two reviewers were so distracted by Madelung's colorful (and at times offensive) remarks concerning individual Muslims that they missed the major accomplishments of *The Succession to Muḥammad*, some of which include:

- 1) An exploration of the concept *ahl al-bayt* (literally, "people of the house") found in the Qurʾān with regard to the families of earlier prophets, and the importance of blood kinship, two concepts that could have made ʿAlī a strong candidate for succession to the Prophet instead of the "obvious" candidate Abū Bakr;¹³
- 2) An emphasis on the violent election of Abū Bakr and the first suppression of the Anṣār at the Saqīfa;¹⁴
- 3) An emphasis on the radical break from Qurʾānic practice in Abū Bakr's denial of inheritance to Fāṭima, ʿAlī, and al-ʿAbbās,

Bakr's entry is little different than that of any of the prominent early *ṣaḥāba* in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

¹¹ Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muḥammad: A study of the early Caliphate* (Cambridge, 1997).

¹² Patricia Crone, "In defence of 'Alī," *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 Feb 1997, p. 28; Yassin Dutton, *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 9 (1998) 66–9. Crone declares flatly that Madelung's opinion is "Shi'ite" while Dutton calls it "pro-ʿAlī." It should be noted that Crone's *God's Caliph* (co-authored with Martin Hinds) is extremely pro-Umayyad and that she states "ʿAlī was a pretender, on a par with the protagonists of the first civil war" (p. 32) despite the overwhelming evidence that only ʿAlī received the oath of allegiance (*bayʿa*) after the death of ʿUthmān. This episode is treated in detail below.

¹³ *Succession*, 6–27. Dutton challenges Madelung's argument concerning the nature of the inheritance of the Prophet (p. 69) but his suggestion that the 'People of Badr' were purified just like the family of the Prophet in the Qurʾān is hardly convincing given that only the Prophet's family were forbidden from receiving alms and received instead a special portion of the war booty; see *Succession*, 13–4.

¹⁴ *Succession*, 28–43.

as well as his willingness to slaughter various Muslim tribes on the basis of his interpretation of their refusal to pay the *zakāt* tax as "apostasy,"¹⁵

- 4) The discovery that ʿUthmān's nepotism originated from the *beginning* of his reign and that all governorships were in the hands of his kin within the first five years of his caliphate;¹⁶
- 5) The suggestion that ʿAlī's caliphate should be described more accurately as a "counter-caliphate" due to the lack of legitimacy it suffered in the absence of a *shūrā* of eminent *ṣaḥāba* and the support of the majority of the Quraysh.¹⁷

Of particular interest for this project is Madelung's extraordinary attention to the sides chosen by dozens of *ṣaḥāba* in the civil strife that erupted immediately after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad and periodically flared until the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān.¹⁸ The richness of Madelung's narrative does make it difficult to keep track of all of these men and women, and so a summary presentation of this material, as well as some additional information gleaned from Ibn Saʿd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, Ibn al-Jawzī's *al-Muntaẓam*, and al-Dhahabī's *Tārīkh al-Islām*, is the first task of this chapter. Whether Madelung's prosopographically dazzling history of the early caliphate ever recovers from the epithets hurled at it by unappreciative reviewers is of little importance, since it demonstrates what *can* be done with the classical Muslim sources, rather than what necessarily *should* be done with them by the theoretically non-partisan modern historian.

¹⁵ *Succession*, 47–53.

¹⁶ *Succession*, 86–7.

¹⁷ *Succession*, 141.

¹⁸ This feature is by far the most significant difference between Madelung's book and Crone and Hinds' *God's Caliph*, both of which claim to be studies of the early caliphate. How Crone and Hinds claim to elucidate the "true" original nature of the caliphate without even mentioning the roles of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the civil war, ʿAlī, the *ṣaḥāba*, Banū Hāshim, the Anṣār, or even the official court *ḥadīth*-scholar al-Zuhrī is puzzling. The student must choose between Madelung's interpretation of the early caliphs as individual actors and Crone and Hinds' thesis that the caliphs were universally respected political-religious officials, each of whom functioned more-or-less like his predecessor.

VI.2 *The problem: The intra-ṣaḥāba conflicts of 11–40/632–661*

There are seven discrete episodes within the first thirty years of the post-prophetic Islamic community that involve either violence or serious dissension among the men and women who embraced Islam during the lifetime of Muḥammad. Despite the fact that both classical Muslim historians and heresiographers¹⁹ have been forthright in their inclusion of these painful episodes in their books, only Madelung has investigated these conflicts thoroughly in *The Succession to Muḥammad*. This section is heavily indebted to Madelung's thorough reading of the sources and seeks both to present and supplement the information found in his book in a clear, unpolemical light in order to articulate the gravity of the early internecine strife that both Sunnīs and Western historians in general continue to sweep under the carpet in their narratives of Islamic origins.

The first conflict arose the day of the Prophet's death between the leaders of the Anṣār and three Muhājirūn over the nature of the political leadership of the Muslim community. Abū Bakr's argument that the supreme leadership should be restricted to the Quraysh triumphed over the Anṣārī al-Ḥubāb b. al-Mundhir's vision of "a commander (*amīr*) from among us and a commander from among you," and the combination of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's oath of allegiance (*bay'a*) and the beating of the Khazrajī leader Sa'd b. 'Ubāda resolved the dispute.²⁰ Despite the general *bay'a* that took place in the main mosque shortly after this event, several *ṣaḥāba* from Banū Hāshim and 'Abd al-Shams refused to give Abū Bakr the *bay'a* for six months.²¹ A significant reason for this delay may have been Abū

¹⁹ Note that the *firaq* books of al-Ash'arī, 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, and al-Shahrastānī all begin with a brief enumeration of most, if not all, of these incidents.

²⁰ This episode, known as the 'Affair of the Saqīfa,' is included by al-Bukhārī in his sub-chapter on the merits of Abū Bakr, as well as elsewhere in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; see Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-bārī*, VII, 368–9.

²¹ Jafri includes a list thirteen *ṣaḥāba* who delayed their *bay'a* to Abū Bakr, only one of whom is mentioned by Madelung as having done so: Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān, Khuzayma b. Thābit, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, Sahl b. Hunayf, 'Uthmān b. Hunayf, al-Barā' b. 'Azib, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, 'Ammār b. Yāsir, al-Miqdād b. 'Amr, Salmān al-Fārisī, al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām, and Khālīd b. Sa'd; *Origins and Development of Early Shi'a Islam*, 51–3. Most of these names are found in the pro-Shi'i *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, II (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, no date), 124 as indicated by Jafri. It is interesting that Jafri fails to include Abū Sufyān, the father of 'Alī's nemesis Mu'āwiya, as well as al-'Abbās and al-Faḍl b. 'Abbās, in this list; *Tārīkh al-Ya'qūbī*, II, 124–6.

Bakr's confiscation of the Prophet's significant revenue-producing lands and the subsequent denial of the right of inheritance to his relatives on the basis of a purported prophetic saying that prophets "do not bequeath [to heirs]." ²² 'Alī, al-'Abbās, Abū l-'Āṣ b. Abī Rabī'a, Abān b. Sa'id, and Khālīd b. Sa'id are all reported to have delayed giving Abū Bakr the *bay'a* until after the death of Fāṭima, ²³ who was buried secretly without the knowledge of the caliph. The Anṣārī Sa'd b. 'Ubāda, who was one of the prestigious twelve *nuqabā'* that facilitated the emigration of the Prophet to Yathrib in his time of need, never gave the *bay'a* to Abū Bakr after the violence he experienced at the Saqīfa incident and may have been the only *ṣaḥābī* to withhold his allegiance to 'Umar.²⁴

The second major conflict among the *ṣaḥāba* was the *ridda* wars whose execution was justified again on the basis of a prophetic *ḥadīth* over the objections of 'Umar.²⁵ These battles pitted Abū Bakr and his Muslim armies against tribes that ranged from advocates of the self-proclaimed prophet Musaylima to Muslims who did not wish to pay the alms tax to the caliph in Medina. Ibn Sa'd identifies six men of the fourth *ṭabaqa* of *ṣaḥāba*, namely those who embraced Islam after the conquest of Mecca, who participated in the *ridda* wars against Abū Bakr's fiscal policy. Only one of these men, Mālik b. Nuwayra, is reported to have been killed, despite his claim that he was not an apostate.²⁶ All of the remaining five men were captured

²² *Succession*, 50. Madelung suggests that Fāṭima must have been shocked to have her father's purported own words used against her by Abū Bakr. The fact that the surviving wives of Muḥammad also came to Abū Bakr to obtain their inheritance indicates that everyone in the Prophet's household expected his or her inheritance to follow the rules sanctioned in the Qur'ān. Abū Bakr's *ḥadīth*, *nahnu l-anbiyā'a lā nūriṭhu mā taraknāhu ṣadaqa*, is found in several places in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and raises the awkward question: was the first use of a *ḥadīth* for the purpose of disinheriting the Prophet's own daughter, cousin, uncle, and wives?

²³ *Succession*, 41.

²⁴ *Succession*, 34–5.

²⁵ *Succession*, 48–9. Madelung neglects to quote the well-known *ḥadīth* "I have been ordered to fight against the people until they testify that there is no god but Allāh and that Muḥammad in the Messenger of Allāh and until they perform the prayers and pay *zakāt* . . ." found in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim; it is the eighth *ḥadīth* in *an-Nawawī's Forty Ḥadīth*, translated by Ezzedin Ibrahim and Denys Johnson-Davies (no date, no place), 46. Note that al-Nawawī's version is from Ibn 'Umar instead of Abū Bakr.

²⁶ *Succession*, 49–50; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 552–4. Madelung refers to Mālik's killing as "cold-blooded execution" and mentions that Khālīd b. al-Walīd appropriated his wife.

and pardoned by Abū Bakr, and two of them later played a role in the victory at Qādisiyya against the Sasanids.²⁷ Abū Bakr even married his sister Umm Farwa *bint* Abī Quḥāfa to the powerful Yemeni rebel al-Ash'ath b. Qays, who later served with distinction at the battle of Nihāwand.²⁸ Qays b. Makshūh, who killed at least two Muslims in the *ridda* wars, was forgiven by Abū Bakr over 'Umar's objection,²⁹ and 'Uyayna b. Ḥiṣn, who had lied to the Prophet during the campaign against al-Ṭā'if, was "brought back to Islam" by the words of Abū Bakr despite having joined the revolt of the "false-prophet" Ṭulayḥa.³⁰

The third episode of intra-*ṣaḥāba* violence involved various members of the "pious opposition" to 'Uthmān's policies and the Egyptian delegation, some of whose partisans ultimately murdered him. The most flagrant confrontations include the beating of 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd and 'Ammār b. Yāsir, as well as the banishment of Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī to Rabadha.³¹ 'Uthmān's harsh treatment of these early *ṣaḥāba* was publicly condemned by 'Ā'isha; other *ṣaḥāba* who stirred up protest against the caliph include Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allāh, 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, and, to a lesser degree, al-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām.³² 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf, the *ṣaḥābī* on the *shūrā* who essentially appointed 'Uthmān as the successor to 'Umar, stipulated that the caliph was not to lead his funeral prayers, a request that was honored in 32/652–3 and adopted by Ibn Mas'ūd. Madelung reports that the "poor Muhājir" Jahjah b. Sa'īd al-Ghifārī threw stones at 'Uthmān during one of his "repentance" *khuṭbas*³³ and that the *ṣaḥābī*

²⁷ These two men were 'Amr b. Ma'dī Karib and Ṭulayḥa b. Khuwaylid; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 592–5 and VIII, 548–9. Ṭulayḥa's pardon is particularly surprising given the reports that he claimed to be a prophet during the *ridda*.

²⁸ *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 578–81.

²⁹ *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 590–1.

³⁰ *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 555–9.

³¹ *Succession*, 96 and 109. Both of these men were among the earliest converts to Islam; 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd and 'Ammār were among the Muhājirūn who fought at Badr, and Abū Dharr Jundub b. Junāda was a non-Meccan emigrant to Medina who first saw action at Uhud. The beating of 'Ammār, a client of Makhzūm, also generated an angry reaction from the Prophet's Makhzūmī widow Umm Salama; *Succession*, 96–7.

³² *Succession*, 90–2, 98–104.

³³ *Succession*, 124. Ibn Sa'd reports that Jahjah was a poor emigrant and when he came towards 'Uthmān during a *khuṭba*, 'Uthmān grabbed his sick and crushed his knees with it; *TK* 2001, V, 108–9.

supervisor of the public treasury, 'Abdullāh b. Arqam, resigned in protest over 'Uthmān's request to enrich his nephew and brother-in-law 'Abdullāh b. Khālid b. Asīd.³⁴ While these incidents were mild in comparison to the *ridda* wars that preceded, and the civil war that erupted after, the killing of 'Uthmān, they did involve some of the most prestigious *ṣaḥāba* and may have been partly responsible for the failure of the Medinans to protect their caliph from the violent protesters who ultimately killed him.

Five *ṣaḥāba* were involved in the Egyptian delegation and the masses who surrounded 'Uthmān's palace demanding his abdication during the last month of 35/June 656. Madelung reports that the first casualty of the "battle day of the palace" (*yawm al-dār*) was the *ṣaḥābī* Niyār b. 'Iyād, who was killed by a rock dropped from the palace by a client of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam.³⁵ Rifā' b. Rāfi' is also reported to have killed a partisan of 'Uthmān outside the palace, and 'Āmir b. Bukayr is said to have struck Sa'īd b. al-ʿĀṣ.³⁶ 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Udays is considered to have been among the leaders of the Egyptian delegation, although it is not clear if he was present at the palace on the day of the assassination.³⁷ Even one of the four identified killers of the caliph was none other than 'Amr b. al-Ḥamiq,

³⁴ *Succession*, 93–4. Madelung reports that the Anṣārī Zayd b. Thābit, whose recension of the Qur'ān was made the official recension to the detriment of the readings of Ibn Mas'ūd and Ubayy b. Ka'b, was sent by 'Uthmān with a large gift in an unsuccessful bid to bring Ibn Arqam to his post. It was probably at this time that Zayd assumed control over the treasury, as he is reported to have been in charge of 'Uthmān's *diwān*.

³⁵ *Succession*, 135. Niyār does not have an entry in the new edition of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, but both he and this episode are mentioned in Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Isāba fī tamyiz al-ṣaḥāba*, III (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1978), 578–9.

³⁶ *Succession*, 137. Rifā' b. Rāfi' b. Mālik was a son of one of the twelve *nuqabā'* of the Anṣār and participated at Badr; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 302. 'Āmir b. Bukayr is rendered as 'Āmir b. Abī l-Bukayr by Ibn Sa'd (*ibid.*, III, 208) but without the "Abī" and with the definitive article (i.e., al-Bukayr) by Ibn Ḥajar; *al-Isāba*, II, 247. Nothing appears to have been preserved about his life other than the fact that he and his three brothers 'Āqil, Iyās, and 'Ammāla fought at Badr.

³⁷ *Succession*, 117. Al-Dhahabī quotes Muḥammad al-Dhuhli as declaring it "unlawful to transmit *ḥadīth*" from 'Abd al-Raḥmān because he was the "head of the *fitna*" (*lā yaḥillu an yuḥaddatha 'anhu bi-shay'in, huwa ra'su l-fitna*); al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa l-a'lām*, ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī, III (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1986), 531–2. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Udays does not receive an entry in the *ṣaḥāba* sections of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, but he is found among those who settled Egypt and identified as the head (*ra's*) of the Egyptian delegation to 'Uthmān; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 236. (Thanks to Ibn Ḥajar for this reference in *al-Isāba*, II, 411).

a late convert to Islam, who, after his own assassination by Ibn Umm al-Ḥakam in northern Iraq, earned the dubious distinction of being the first man in Islamic history to have his decapitated head sent by post to a ruler.³⁸

Before we delve into the major roles played by the *ṣaḥāba* in the civil war that engulfed the entire four years of 'Alī's counter-caliphate, it would be useful to mention the names of the prominent *ṣaḥāba* who died of natural causes during 'Uthmān's reign, because their loss was a blow to the leadership of the Muslim community on the eve of a major crisis. Ubayy b. Ka'b, a prominent Qur'ān scholar of the Anṣār, and six other less well known participants at Badr passed away in the year 30/650–1.³⁹ Eight major *ṣaḥāba* died during the crucial years of 32–33/652–4: al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf, Abū l-Dardā', Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī,⁴⁰ Salmān al-Fārisī,⁴¹ Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb,⁴² and al-Miqdād b. 'Amr (d. 33/654).⁴³ Finally, two famous Anṣār, 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit and Abū Talḥa Zayd b. Sahl, passed away in 34/654–5.⁴⁴ Whether these *ṣaḥāba* could have influenced 'Uthmān to change his highly unpopular policies or even abdicate is purely speculative, but there is little doubt that their presence during the siege of 35/656 could have ameliorated the tense situation.

The fourth episode in the unraveling of the unity of the Muslim community during the age when numerous *ṣaḥāba* were still alive was the reluctance of many individuals to offer 'Alī the *bay'a* after

³⁸ *Succession*, 118, 138–9. The story about 'Amr's head is found also in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 599.

³⁹ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 259–61. Other death dates for Ubayy include 19 or 20 (Ibn Ma'in) and 22 (al-Wāqidi, on the authority of Ubayy's descendants, and Ibn Ḥibbān); Ibn 'Abd al-Barr thought that he died during the caliphate of 'Umar, while Ibn Hajar follows Abū Nu'aym and states that the most accurate date is 30; *al-Iṣāba*, I, 19–20. The six remaining "men of Badr" who died this year are Ḥaṭīb b. Abī Balta'a, 'Abdullāh b. Maẓ'un, Ma'mar b. Abī Sarḥ, 'Iyād b. Zuhayr, Mas'ūd b. al-Rabī', and Jabbār b. Ṣakhr; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 61, 214, 222, 89–90, and 293. Note that an additional fourteen *ṣaḥāba* who fought at Badr are reported by Ibn Sa'd to have died at sometime during the reign of 'Uthmān.

⁴⁰ Obituaries for these first five men can be found in this sequence in *al-Dhahabī, Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 373–414.

⁴¹ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī tārīkh al-umam wa l-mulūk*, V (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1992), 20–27.

⁴² *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 481–5.

⁴³ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 85–7.

⁴⁴ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 280–1 and 262–4, respectively. Note that 'Ubāda was the last surviving member of the twelve *nuqabā'* of the Anṣār, and that some say that he lived until the reign of Mu'āwiya.

the killing of 'Uthmān. There are five reports found in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh al-rusul wa l-mulūk* that name individual *ṣaḥāba* who delayed giving 'Alī the *bay'a* or simply fled to Syria. These reports resurface in several later histories such as al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*, Ibn al-Jawzī's *Muntaẓam*, and Ibn Khaldūn's *al-I'bar*, as well as Madelung's *The Succession to Muḥammad*. The following outline summarizes the content of these five reports:

- A. 'Umar b. Shabba: Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās and 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar delayed the *bay'a*⁴⁵
- B. 'Abdullah b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan: the 'Uthmānī Anṣār who delayed the *bay'a* were⁴⁶
 - 1) Ḥassān b. Thābit
 - 2) Ka'b b. Mālik
 - 3) Maslama b. Mukhallad
 - 4) Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī
 - 5) Muḥammad b. Maslama
 - 6) al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr
 - 7) Zayd b. Thābit
 - 8) Rāfi' b. Khadij
 - 9) Faḍāla b. 'Ubayd
 - 10) Ka'b b. 'Ujra
- C. al-Zuhri: those Meccans who fled to Syria were⁴⁷
 - 1) Qudāma b. Maẓ'un
 - 2) 'Abdullāh b. Salām
 - 3) al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba
- D. Ibn Sa'd → Wāqidi: those who delayed (*tarabbaṣa*) giving the *bay'a* were⁴⁸
 - 1) Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās
 - 2) 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar
 - 3) Ṣuhayb b. Sinān
 - 4) Zayd b. Thābit
 - 5) Muḥammad b. Maslama
 - 6) Salama b. Waqqsh⁴⁹
 - 7) Usāma b. Zayd
- E. Sayf b. 'Umar: The Medinese tried to give the *bay'a* to Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās or Ibn 'Umar, but they both refused to accept it.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, I, 425 (3070); al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa ma'ādin al-jawāhīr*, II (Beirut: Dār al-Naḥḥās, 1965), 353; Ibn Khaldūn, *Tārīkh al-allāma Ibn Khaldūn*, II (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1956), 1055.

⁴⁶ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, I, 430–1 (3070); Mas'ūdī, II, 353; Ibn Khaldūn, II, 1055; *Succession*, 146. Note that Ibn Khaldūn adds Salama b. Salāma b. Wiksh to this list.

⁴⁷ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, I, 430 (3070); Mas'ūdī, II, 353; *al-Muntaẓam*, V, 64; Ibn Khaldūn, II, 1055; *Succession*, 148.

⁴⁸ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, I, 431 (3072); *al-Muntaẓam*, V, 64; *Succession*, 146. Ibn Khaldūn only mentions Ṣuhayb and Usāma b. Zayd among these seven; *Tārīkh al-allāma Ibn Khaldūn*, II, 1055.

⁴⁹ Ibn al-Jawzī substitutes Muslim b. Salām for him.

⁵⁰ *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, I, 432 (3073–4). Mas'ūdī adds to these names Aḥbāb b. Sayfī, Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ, and al-Walīd b. 'Uqba; *Murūj al-dhahab*, II, 353–4.

There appears to be a relatively high degree of consensus as to the identity of these *ṣaḥāba* who delayed giving their oath of allegiance to 'Alī or simply fled the Hījāz.⁵¹ We must add to this list, of course, Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān in Syria and 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, who was probably at his estate in Palestine. The question as to whether Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr gave their *bayʿa* under the sword of al-Ashtar or by their own will is unclear, as there are reports that support both possibilities, but their departure from Medina and subsequent armed insurrection left 'Alī in the awkward position of lacking the support of any of the three surviving members of the *shūrā* that elected 'Uthmān to the caliphate or of the Meccan Qurayshī aristocracy.

The fifth, and possibly most traumatic conflict between the *ṣaḥāba*, was the Battle of the Camel in 36/656. Unlike the *ridḍa* wars, which involved large Muslim armies against a few late-conversion *ṣaḥāba*, most of whom were subsequently forgiven, the Battle of the Camel involved prominent *ṣaḥābī* leaders and soldiers. Three groups of *ṣaḥāba* can be discerned in this conflict. The smallest group consists of Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī, 'Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn, and Abū Bakra al-Thaqafī, as well as the *ṣaḥāba* listed above who delayed giving the *bayʿa* to 'Alī, all of whom refused to fight on either side of the battle.⁵² While it is not likely that the participation of these individuals would have altered the outcome of the battle, their decision to remain neutral (*i'tizāl*) was admired greatly by later Murji'a and Sunnīs who were gravely distressed by the problem of intra-*ṣaḥāba* warfare.

The losing side of the Camel was led by 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr, half of whom perished in this event. It was financed largely by 'Uthmān's governors to Yemen, two *ṣaḥāba* named Ya'lā b. Umayya and 'Abdullāh b. Abī Rabī'a, who seized the treasury upon hearing of their caliph's murder and returned to Mecca.⁵³ The first casualty occurred prior to the arrival of 'Alī's army when the *ṣaḥābī* Hukaym b. Jabala was killed and 'Uthmān b. Ḥunayf abused in the rebels' assault on the granary of Basra.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Note that Ibn Sa'd states that several of these men, such as Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Usāma b. Zayd, Muḥammad b. Maslama, and Zayd b. Thābit, all gave the *bayʿa* to 'Alī without any mention of a delay; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 19.

⁵² *Succession*, 165–6 (Abū Mūsā), 161 ('Imrān), 167 (Abū Bakra).

⁵³ *Succession*, 155. Ibn Abī l-Rabī'a is reported to have fallen off of a camel and broken a thigh, thus preventing him from joining the rebels in person; Ya'lā fled when the defeat was inevitable.

⁵⁴ *Succession*, 163. 'Uthmān b. Ḥunayf was 'Alī's appointed governor to Basra

One of the leaders of this raid was the *ṣaḥābī* Mujāshi' b. Mas'ūd Sulamī, and both he and his brother Mujālid were killed in the Battle of the Camel fighting against 'Alī.⁵⁵ At least three additional *ṣaḥāba* were killed fighting against 'Alī at the Camel, one of whom was a brother of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf.⁵⁶ Finally, 'Ā'isha's brother 'Abd al-Raḥmān, who fought against the Muslims at Badr and Uḥud and did not embrace Islam until just prior to the conquest of Mecca, fought on his sister's side and escaped the battle with his life intact.⁵⁷

The leadership of 'Alī's camp who were *ṣaḥāba* include his sons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, cousin 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās, and the early convert 'Ammār b. Yāsir. His appointed governors include both early Anṣār, such as Sahl and 'Uthmān b. Ḥunayf, and Qays b. Sa'd b. 'Ubāda, as well as the Hāshimīs 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abbās in Ṣan'ā' and Qutham b. 'Abbās in Mecca.⁵⁸ Two over-enthusiastic *ṣaḥāba* on 'Alī's side were the regicidal 'Amr b. al-Ḥamiq and Ḥujr b. 'Adī, the latter of whom achieved prominence for his refusal to curse 'Alī and subsequent execution by Mu'āwiya.⁵⁹ Abū Qatāda b. al-Rib'ī, who was by the Prophet's side from the time of Uḥud, and Sulaymān b. Ṣurād may also have fought on behalf of 'Alī at the Camel.⁶⁰ Finally, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ's nephew Hāshim b. 'Utba survived the

from the Anṣār. He had served under 'Umar in the organization of the *kharāj* of Iraq and the assessment of the poll tax on non-Muslims. His first battle with the Prophet was Uḥud; *TK* 2001, IV, 304–6. Hukaym's status as a *ṣaḥābī* is somewhat tenuous and he is not mentioned by Ibn Sa'd in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*; see instead *al-Iṣāba*, I, 379.

⁵⁵ *Succession*, 162–3. Both men are found among the *ṣaḥāba* who converted after the conquest of Mecca in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 561.

⁵⁶ The men are al-Aswad b. 'Awf (*TK* 2001, V, 19–20; *Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 491; *Succession*, 177), 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Attāb (*Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 530–1; *Succession*, 176), and 'Abdullāh b. Khalaf al-Khuzā'i (*Succession*, 173).

⁵⁷ *Succession*, 164; *TK* 2001, V, 21–5.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam*, V, 75 and Ibn Khaldūn, II, 1058–61. 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abbās was one year younger than his famous brother 'Abdullāh and was thirteen when the Prophet died; *TK* 2001, VI, 348. Qutham led numerous raids into Khurāsān for the Umayyads and died in Samarqand during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān; *TK* 2001, VI, 349–50.

⁵⁹ Ḥujr b. 'Adī receives entries both as a *ṣaḥābī* and a *ṭābi'i* in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VI, 468–70 and VIII, 582. Ibn Ḥajar does include him as a *ṣaḥābī* in *al-Iṣāba*, I, 314–5. The story of his execution is found in the first of these references.

⁶⁰ *Succession*, 164–5 (Abū Qatāda). Ibn Sa'd puts Sulaymān at the Camel, *pace* Madelung (p. 183); *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, IV, 465. Sulaymān is also credited with having written the invitation to Ḥusayn b. 'Alī to liberate Kufa and then failing to appear in his moment of need; later, Ibn Sa'd reports, he led the *ṭawwābūn*. Sulaymān embraced Islam prior to the conquest of Mecca and lived until 54/674.

Camel, while the venerable Qur'ān-reciter Zayd b. Ṣūhān did not.⁶¹ While this day of warfare broke the taboo of large-scale bloodshed between *ṣaḥābī*-led and manned armies, few could have expected the far greater losses of life that haunted the remainder of 'Alī's brief counter-caliphate.

The sixth internecine conflict followed upon the precedent of the Battle of the Camel and found two *ṣaḥābī*-led armies engaged in open warfare.⁶² The Battle of Ṣiffīn differed from that of the Camel in two important respects: first, it lasted several days and was inconclusive, and secondly, the opposition to 'Alī was led by a late convert to Islam and son of an enemy of the Prophet Muḥammad as opposed to two of the earliest Muslims and a wife of the Prophet. Despite these differences, the same three groups of *ṣaḥāba* that were found at the Camel persisted, with the neutrals gaining 'Alī's failed ambassador to Mu'āwiya, Jarīr b. 'Abdullāh al-Bajalī. Mu'āwiya's leadership included the *ṣaḥāba* 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, his son 'Abdullāh, and 'Uthmān's alcoholic uterine brother al-Walīd b. 'Uqba. Ibn Sa'd mentions three *ṣaḥāba* who fought with Mu'āwiya at Ṣiffīn and survived: the post-Meccan conquest converts 'Adī b. 'Amīra b. Farwa, Zaml b. 'Amr, and 'Uqba b. 'Āmir.⁶³ One more potential *ṣaḥābī* on the side of Mu'āwiya who did not survive Ṣiffīn was al-Samayfa' b. Nākūr, more commonly known as Dhū l-Kalā' al-Ḥimyarī, a powerful leader of the Yemenis in Ḥims.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *Succession*, 234 (Hāshim). Zayd b. Ṣūhān's status as a *ṣaḥābī* is unclear; Ibn Hajar included him in the third class, namely those who were alive prior to and contemporary with the revelation of the Qur'ān but who are not recorded as having met the Prophet Muḥammad; *al-Iṣāba*, I, 582–3. See also al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 508–9.

⁶² The role of the *ṣaḥāba* in this conflict, the Battle of Ṣiffīn, has received recently a thorough study by Fu'ad Jabali entitled "A Study of the Companions of the Prophet: Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 1999). Jabali analyzes the classical biographical dictionaries of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, Ibn al-Athīr, al-Dhahabī, and Ibn Hajar and verifies a minimum of 123 *ṣaḥāba*, 43 of whom were early converts, with 'Alī, 31 with Mu'āwiya, and 7 neutral at Ṣiffīn (pp. 218, 237, and 241).

⁶³ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 583, 611 and IV, 489, respectively. 'Adī b. 'Amīra was among one of several clans of Kinda that left Kufa for Edessa when 'Alī's partisans arrived and began to insult 'Uthmān. His son 'Adī b. 'Adī was a pious friend of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and later governor of northern Iraq under Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik. Zaml is reported to have appeared at Ṣiffīn with a banner given to him by the Prophet, and his grandson Mudlij b. al-Miqdād b. Zaml was a notable (*sharīf*) in Syria. 'Uqba b. 'Āmir of Qudā'a built a house and settled in Egypt after Ṣiffīn, where he died during the reign of Mu'āwiya.

⁶⁴ Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 565–6. Madelung interprets his death as being

Although al-Mas'ūdī's assertion that 2800 *ṣaḥāba* were with 'Alī at Ṣiffīn, twenty-five of whom were killed, is almost certainly an exaggeration, there were certainly more *ṣaḥābī*-casualties on the Iraqī side of the battlefield.⁶⁵ The most famous loss was the ancient 'Ammār b. Yāsir, whose martyrdom at the hands of the "astray group" (*al-fi'at al-bāghiya*) was predicted in a widely circulated *ḥadīth*.⁶⁶ Hāshim b. 'Utba b. Abī Waqqāṣ was not so lucky this day, nor were the Anṣārīs Abū 'Amra Bashīr b. 'Amr,⁶⁷ Khuzayma b. Thābit,⁶⁸ and Sa'd b. al-Ḥārith b. al-Ṣimma.⁶⁹ The spokesman for the Anṣār was a veteran of Badr, Sahl b. Ḥunayf, who had served as 'Alī's governor of Medina during the battle of the Camel,⁷⁰ and one of the major generals was the former Yemeni apostate al-Ash'ath b. Qays.⁷¹ 'Alī was also blessed with the support of a powerful chief of the Ṭayy, 'Adī b. Ḥātim, a late convert and veteran of the victory of Qādisiyya,⁷² as well as the battle-toughened Ḥujr b. 'Adī and Sulaymān b. Ṣurād. Three additional confirmed or potential *ṣaḥāba* are mentioned by al-Dhahabī among those killed at Ṣiffīn fighting against Mu'āwiya.⁷³ Despite the fact that several of 'Alī's most cherished partisans, such as Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and al-Ashtar, were not *ṣaḥāba*, the loss of a group of his most energetic supporters with

appreciated by Mu'āwiya since he was a potential rival for power in Ḥims; *Succession*, 234–5.

⁶⁵ Mas'ūdī, III, 352.

⁶⁶ This report is found with various *isnāds* in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 134–5; *Fath al-bānī*, II, 111; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XVIII, 32–3; and Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Kiṭāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VII, 547 and 551.

⁶⁷ *TK* 2001, V, 321; *Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 585; *Succession*, 143.

⁶⁸ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, IV, 503–5; *Tārīkh al-Islām*, 564–6; *Succession*, 215. Khuzayma was known as the "possessor of two witnesses" (*dhū l-shahādātayn*) due to the report that he was a unique source for several verses of Sūrat al-Tawba (9) during 'Uthmān's drive to compile an official codex. He entered Islam after Uḥud and prior to the conquest of Mecca.

⁶⁹ *TK* 2001, V, 321.

⁷⁰ *Succession*, 215; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 247–8. Sahl's death a year after Ṣiffīn must have been a major blow to 'Alī's troubled counter-caliphate.

⁷¹ Al-Ash'ath is credited with forcing 'Alī to accept the arbitration agreement and to appoint the "neutral" Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī as his representative, two actions which, in hindsight, had disastrous consequences for 'Alī's fledgling regime; *Succession*, 239–42.

⁷² *Succession*, 240; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VIII, 571–6.

⁷³ 'Abdullāh b. Budayl (*Succession*, 232–3; *Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 567); Jundab b. Zuhayr (*Tārīkh al-Islām*, III, 560); 'Abdullāh b. Ka'b al-Murādī (*ibid.*, III, 568). Al-Dhahabī is uncertain whether these last two men were *ṣaḥāba*, while Ibn Hajar confirms that both of them were Companions; *al-Iṣāba*, I, 248 and II, 363.

whom he had fought the clan of Mu'āwiya both in the Prophet's day and thirty years later severely weakened his camp and may have been part of the reason why al-Ḥasan saw little reason to continue shedding Muslim blood for the acquisition of the caliphate after his father's murder.

The last episode of intra-*ṣaḥāba* conflict is less precise than the battles and succession disputes and concerns the raids that occurred in the wake of the inconclusive battle of Ṣiffīn. The most vicious of these raids, called *ghārāt*, at least according to Madelung, was that of the *ṣaḥābī* Busr b. Abī Arṭāt.⁷⁴ This raid was ordered by Mu'āwiya in 40/660–1; it included a compulsory *bay'a* to Mu'āwiya by the people of Medina and the massacre of an unspecified number of 'Alid supporters in the Ḥijāz and Yemen. Abū Hurayra is reported to have been the temporary governor of Medina set up by Busr, an association of which later Sunnī scholars may not have been particularly proud.⁷⁵ Another early *ṣaḥābī* who may have led propaganda raids in favor of Mu'āwiya was al-Nu'mān Bashīr, who is reported by Madelung to have led one such expedition with Abū Hurayra.⁷⁶ On the other side of the struggle, 'Alī's massacre of the Khawārij at Nahrawān in 38/658, not only put a stain on his pious image but ultimately planted the seeds of his own assassination; the deafening lack of support he received from the remaining early *ṣaḥāba* could only have demoralized him in his final months of struggle against all sides.

This brief historical survey of seven episodes of intra-Muslim conflict that unfolded during the first thirty years after Muḥammad's death should be seen both as an effort to highlight the entrenched role of the *ṣaḥāba* on opposite sides of battle, as well as demonstrate the deep insight of Madelung's prosopographical *tour de force* that has been written off by some scholars as a mere pro-Shī'ī tract. A serious

⁷⁴ *Succession*, 299–307. Busr is found in the last class of *ṣaḥāba*, namely those who were children at the time of the death of the Prophet Muḥammad; *TK* 2001, VI, 539–40. His raid is mentioned by Ibn Sa'd, who observes that he killed a hundred men of Banū Ka'b who had supported 'Alī after 'Alī was killed. Even al-Bukhārī mentions the killing of 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Abbās's two young sons in this raid; see al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-awsaṭ*, I, 186–8.

⁷⁵ *Succession*, 301.

⁷⁶ *Succession*, 287, 301. Al-Nu'mān was the first Anṣārī born after the Hijra and was only eight years old at the time of the Prophet's death; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, IV, 479–88.

problem facing the second, third, and every successive generation of Muslims has been one of historiography: how does one make sense of the struggles between the witnesses of Muḥammad? In my opinion, both Madelung and Jafri deserve credit for their arguments that the struggles for the leadership of the Muslim community emerged *the day the Prophet died* and not during the second half of 'Uthmān's caliphate, as is generally depicted in Western sources.⁷⁷ I shall devote the rest of this chapter to elucidating how the compilers of the earliest extant books explained these rather serious intra-*ṣaḥāba* "quarrels" in the course of the third/ninth century and focus in particular on the interpretive strategies deployed by the Imāmī Shī'a, Zaydiyya/Baghdādī Mu'tazila, and Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholars.

VI.3 Two minority solutions:

The Imāmī Shī'a and Zaydiyya/Baghdādī Mu'tazila

VI.3.1

Why are the historiographical solutions to the problem of intra-*ṣaḥāba* conflict put forth by the Imāmī Shī'a and the Zaydiyya/Baghdādī Mu'tazila of relevance to this study? Is not this discourse a question of creed (*aqīda*) rather than fundamentals of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*)? How is it possible that the three radically different interpretations of the nature of the *ṣaḥāba* that Muslims articulated during the early centuries of Islam determined to a large degree the nature of both religious law (*sharī'a*) and Qur'ānic exegesis?

Given the fact that all knowledge of the Prophet's practice, or *sunna*, is accessible solely through reports from contemporary witnesses, and, that these witnesses are all by definition *ṣaḥāba*, the rejection of any *ṣaḥābī*'s religious authority inevitably eliminates a body of reports and thus potentially invalidates practices performed by the Prophet that would otherwise have had a legal value. Since it is impossible to articulate the *sharī'a* solely on the basis of the Qur'ān,

⁷⁷ Kennedy's *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates* provides a good example of this habit; the violent nature of the Saqīfa is sanitized, the disinheritance of 'Alī is left unspoken (although he does call 'Umar's selection of Abū Bakr a *coup d'état*), and the heading for 'Uthmān's reign is called "'Uthmān and the beginnings of internal strife." See Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 50–69.

these reports are necessary in order for Muslims to perform basic practices, such as prayer, almsgiving, and the pilgrimage,⁷⁸ with any degree of cohesion. While this book is hardly the place to examine the full impact of the Imāmī Shī'ī and Zaydī/Baghdādī Mu'tazilī attitudes towards the *ṣaḥāba* upon their respective constructions of Islamic law, I will show the profound impact these attitudes had on Qur'ānic exegesis in the case of the first group and examine how both the Zaydīs and Sunnīs established the authority of the vast majority of the *ṣaḥāba* so as to salvage the legal value of their prophetic reports that had amassed during the first three centuries of Islam.

VI.3.2 *The Imāmī Shī'a and the ṣaḥāba*

A very brief historical survey of the development of Imāmī Shī'ism prior to its crystallization during the dawn of the Greater Occultation of the twelfth Imām around 329/941 is necessary in order to comprehend the impact of its radical rejection of the authority of virtually all of the *ṣaḥāba*. Hossein Modarressi argues that a distinct Imāmī legal school did not exist prior to the time of the fifth Imām Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Bāqir (Imām from 95–114/714–32) and Etan Kohlberg credits this Imām with the origination of the idea of the apostasy of all but a handful of *ṣaḥāba*.⁷⁹ The period of the sixth Imām, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (Imām from 114–48/732–65), witnessed both the proliferation of legal reports as well as the rise of what Modarressi identifies as the *mufawwiḍa* movement that attributed supernatural powers to the Imāms.⁸⁰ This movement achieved its breakthrough after the death of 'Alī al-Riḍā (d. 203/818), when it asserted that the miraculous succession of the seven-year-old Muḥammad al-Jawād was due to 'divine grace', and blossomed throughout the third/ninth century.⁸¹ The reaction against the *mufawwiḍa* was located among the scholars of Qumm, whose insistence on the treatment of the Imāms

as mere human legal authorities rather than "God's delegated authorities" earned them the pejorative title *muqaṣṣira*, or "short-changers."⁸² The *mufawwiḍa* were aided by the theories of Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795–6), one of which was that the *ṣaḥāba* actually became disbelievers (*kuffār*) due to their rejection of 'Alī's imamate at the death of the Prophet Muḥammad.⁸³ The struggle between the *mufawwiḍa* and *muqaṣṣira* peaked during the Lesser Occultation (260–329/874–941) and climaxed with the former's victory in the publication of Muḥammad al-Kulaynī's book *al-Kāfi*, held by the Imāmī Shī'a as the first of their four canonical *ḥadīth* books.⁸⁴ Despite the triumph of Kulaynī's *mufawwiḍa* masterpiece, the early *muqaṣṣira* attitude has been preserved in al-Kashshī's (d. fourth/tenth century) biographical dictionary, and the following comparison of these two books with regard to their attitudes towards the *ṣaḥāba* reveals only minor differences between these two early Imāmī Shī'ī schools of thought on this topic.

Etan Kohlberg's identification of five strategies employed by early Imāmī Shī'a to discredit the authority of the *ṣaḥāba* merits a brief note prior to our discussion of the *Uṣūl al-kāfi* of al-Kulaynī and al-Ṭūsī's *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl* (*rijāl al-Kashshī*). The first two of these techniques were the claims of the collective apostasy of the *ṣaḥāba* and their loss of faith (*īmān*) due to their failure to recognize the Imāmate of 'Alī. A third method was to identify the *ṣaḥāba* with the Qur'ānic class of people known as "hypocrites" (*munāfiqūn*) due to their lack of loyalty to 'Alī, as well as on the basis of the modification of a well known story of the hypocrites' effort to kill the Prophet to involve fourteen famous *ṣaḥāba*.⁸⁵ Another creative technique was to

⁷⁸ *Crisis and Consolidation*, 39.

⁷⁹ "Some Imāmī Shī'ī views of the *ṣaḥāba*," 148.

⁸⁰ *Crisis and Consolidation*, 42–7. For the status of this book as 'canonical' see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shī'ī Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 174. Note that Sunnīs probably would not call this a *ḥadīth* book, since virtually none of the reports are prophetic locutions or practices but rather quotes of the Imāms Muḥammad Bāqir, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, and 'Alī al-Riḍā.

⁸¹ "Some Imāmī Shī'ī views of the *ṣaḥāba*," 151–4. The fourteen men who were named regularly are Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Ṭalḥa, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Awf, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Abū 'Ubayda, Mu'āwiya, 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba, Aws b. Ḥadathān al-Nāṣirī, Abū Hurayra, and Abū Ṭalḥa al-Anṣārī. 'Ā'isha also has a negative role in this episode. Six *ṣaḥāba* are recognized in a positive light, however, for their supposed recognition of 'Alī as the Prophet's successor: Salmān al-Fārisī, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, Khuzayma b. Thābit, Abū l-Haytham al-Tayyihān, 'Ammār b. Yāsir, and al-Miqdād b. 'Amr.

⁷⁸ It is striking that the fast of Ramaḍān is the only pillar of Islam that is thoroughly articulated in the Qur'ān and in theory is free from any reliance upon prophetic reports; see *Sūrat al-Baqara* (2):183–7. In practice, of course, all topically-organized *ḥadīth* books have at least one chapter on fasting.

⁷⁹ Hossein Modarressi, *Crisis and Consolidation in the Formative Period of Shī'ite Islam* (Princeton: Darwin, 1993), 4; Etan Kohlberg, "Some Imāmī Shī'ī views of the *ṣaḥāba*," *JSAI*, 5 (1984), 147.

⁸⁰ *Crisis and Consolidation*, 21.

⁸¹ *Crisis and Consolidation*, 32–3.

restrict the meaning of *ṣaḥāba* in pro-*ṣaḥāba* *ḥadīth* to the Prophet's family (*ahl al-bayt*). The final, and most extreme interpretation, involved the dualist notion of opposites (*addād*), namely that every good figure had his or her evil opposite. While this theory worked well with characters such as Adam and Satan, at least one radical Shī'ī interpreted the "good" to include Muḥammad, 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and Fāṭima and their evil opposites as Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Mu'āwiya, and 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ.⁸⁶ My investigation of the *Uṣūl al-kāfi* and *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl* demonstrates the utilization of the first four of these techniques of discrediting the *ṣaḥāba* among both the *mufawwiḍa* and *muqassira* schools of early Imāmī thought.

The most striking feature of *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl* of al-Kashshī with respect to the *ṣaḥāba* is the extraordinary interpretation of the "apostasy wars" (*ridḍa*) immediately following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. Several reports on the authorities of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and his son Ja'far al-Ṣādiq state explicitly that all of the *ṣaḥāba*, even 'Ammār b. Yāsir, apostatized except Salmān al-Fārisī, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, and al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad.⁸⁷ Several of the reports also mention that four more *ṣaḥāba* repented from this act, thus fulfilling 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib's prophesy that "seven will inherit the earth, aid you, and cause rain to fall."⁸⁸ These men are identified in a couple of reports as Abū Sāsān, 'Ammār b. Yāsir, Shutayra, and Abū 'Amra, and al-Kashshī quotes Muḥammad al-Bāqir as saying that only these seven men recognized 'Alī's claim (*ḥaqq*).⁸⁹ Only three of these men—Salmān, Abū Dharr, and 'Ammār—receive significant attention in al-Kashshī's work, and it is striking that absolutely nothing is said about al-Miqdād.⁹⁰ Despite al-Kashshī's

⁸⁶ "Some Imāmī Shī'ī views of the *ṣaḥāba*," 165. Kohlberg notes on the next page that the concept of *addād* was adopted by the Ismā'īlīs.

⁸⁷ Muḥammad Ḍ. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl (rijāl al-Kashshī)*, ed. Ḥasan Muṣṭafā (Mashhad, 1348), 6–12. The question of 'Ammār's apostasy is found in reports on the authority of Muḥammad Bāqir; *ibid.*, 8–9 and 11–12.

⁸⁸ *dāqat al-arḍu bi-sab'atin bi-him turzaqūna wa bi-him tunṣarūna wa bi-him tumṭarūn minhum Salmān al-Fārisī wa l-Miqdād wa Abū Dharr wa 'Ammār wa Hudhayfa wa kāna 'Alī yaqūlu wa anā imāmuhum wa hum alladhīna ṣallū 'alā Fāṭima; Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 6–7. It is not clear from this report whether 'Alī provided the names of his companions or a later Imām did so.

⁸⁹ *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 7 and 11–2.

⁹⁰ *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 12–24 (Salmān); 24–9 (Abū Dharr); 29–36 ('Ammār). Note that most of the reports in 'Ammār's section have Sunnī *isnāds* and are *ḥadīth* found in the Sunnī *ṣaḥīḥ* literature, such as his last drink being milk, his nickname

assertion of the mass apostasy of the *ṣaḥāba*, ten or so additional Companions do receive some positive attention in the pages that follow, and it is to these men that we shall now turn.

Al-Kashshī's depiction of a small group of *ṣaḥāba* in a positive light reflects a degree of moderation within the *muqassira* Imāmī Shī'ī interpretation of *ridḍa*. Salmān al-Fārisī towers above all of the other men, as he alone is identified as a *muḥaddath*,⁹¹ deflates Qurayshī arrogance in a conversation with 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, and even chastises the people for having "fled from the Qur'ān to the *ḥadīth*."⁹² Abū Dharr is depicted as teaching the Prophet a supplication, telling people to "adhere to the Book of God and Shaykh 'Alī" in the event of civil discord (*fitna*), and rejecting a 200 *dīnār* gift from 'Uthmān on the grounds that "the *walāya* of 'Alī and the rightly-guided family (*'itra*)" made him wealthy.⁹³ We have just encountered several of these men, such as Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān, Sahl b. Ḥunayf, Khuzayma b. Thābit, 'Amr b. al-Ḥamiq, among the loyal soldiers or partisans of 'Alī in his wars, while others, such as Bilāl, Usāma b. Zayd, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, and Jābir b. 'Abdullāh come as a bit of a surprise.⁹⁴ Jābir is depicted particularly well as exhorting the Anṣār to teach their children to love 'Alī and being personally close with the young Muḥammad al-Bāqir in Medina. Four additional Anṣār who testified

as al-Ṭayyib b. al-Ṭayyib (Good son of Good), and that the party who kills him is astray. The absence of reports pertaining to the virtues of al-Miqdād could very well be the editorial work of al-Ṭūsī, and may not reflect an act of negligence on the part of al-Kashshī.

⁹¹ *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 12, 15–6, and 19. Al-Kashshī explains in a report on page three that a *muḥaddath* (literally, "one who is told") is someone who "is made to comprehend" (*mufahham*). Most of the reports say that Salmān achieved this state from an Imām, although one does say it was from an angel; *ibid.*, 19. William Graham has observed that 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is identified as a *muḥaddath* in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim; see his *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (Paris, 1977), 37.

⁹² *harabtum min al-Qur'ān ilā l-ḥadīth; Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 18.

⁹³ *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 25–8.

⁹⁴ *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 36–44. Usāma b. Zayd is mentioned in direct contrast with Muḥammad b. Maslama, Ibn 'Umar, and Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ who continued in error and did not receive any of the *ḥaqq* per 'Alī's instructions; *ibid.*, 39. Likewise, Bilāl is contrasted with Ṣuhayb, whose bad deed in the eyes of al-Bāqir was weeping over the death of 'Umar, and Hudhayfa is contrasted with Ibn Mas'ūd who erred by following the opinions of the masses (*al-qawm*); *ibid.*, 38–9. This report also includes a useful list of sixteen *ṣaḥāba* who returned to 'Alī (called *al-sābiqūn*, from Sūrat al-Wāqī'a [56]:10) according to the third/ninth century Imāmī scholar al-Faḍl b. Shādhān.

to the veracity of the Prophet's statement at Ghadīr Khumm that "Alī was the patron of everyone whose patron was Muḥammad"⁹⁵ are contrasted with Anas b. Malik and al-Bara' b. 'Āzib, both of whom refused to accept the validity of this prophetic statement and subsequently succumbed to leprosy and blindness.⁹⁶ Finally, al-Kashshī includes reports in which Ibn 'Abbās' extraordinary knowledge of the Qur'ān is challenged by 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, and in which he scolds 'Ā'isha after the Battle of the Camel severely.⁹⁷ Despite these positive qualities, Ibn 'Abbās's controversial confiscation of a good portion of the Basran treasury is commented upon rather melancholically by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib: "This is a nephew of the Messenger of Allah! He did what he did despite his great knowledge and capacity—How will those who are inferior to him believe?"⁹⁸

Al-Kulaynī's *Uṣūl al-kāfi* takes a hardline *mufawwiḍa* departure from al-Kashshī's praise of a dozen pro-'Alī *ṣahāba*. In fact, al-Kulaynī's primary approach to the *ṣahāba* is exclusion, for they are rendered invisible by the blinding praise showered upon the twelve Imāms. His method of achieving this outcome is twofold, namely establishing the religious obligation of obedience to an Imām and then employing quixotic Qur'ānic exegesis in order to uncover dozens of secret references to the twelve Imāms. The first stage of this process consists of seventeen reports on the authority of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq stating in various, concise ways the necessity of obeying an Imām. Examples include "We are a people whom God has made obligatory to obey"⁹⁹ and "whoever recognizes us is a Believer, whoever rejects us is a disbeliever, and whoever neither recognizes nor rejects us is astray."¹⁰⁰ Particularly conspicuous in this section is the interpretation of "those of you who are in authority" in the Qur'ānic verse "O you who believe! Obey Allāh, and obey the Messenger, and those of you who are in authority . . ." (4:59) as

⁹⁵ *man kuntu mawlāhu fa 'Alī mawlāhu*; see *Succession*, 253. This *ḥadīth* is found in both the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal and *Jāmi'* of al-Tirmidhī.

⁹⁶ *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 45. These four *ṣahāba* are Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, Khuzyama b. Thābit, Qays b. Sa'd b. 'Ubāda, and 'Abdullāh b. Budayl.

⁹⁷ *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 53–63.

⁹⁸ *hādha ibnu 'ammi rasūli llāhi fi 'ilmihī wa qadrīhī yaf'alu mithla hādha fa-kayfa yu'minu man kāna dūnah?* *Ikhtiyār ma'rifat al-rijāl*, 60.

⁹⁹ *nahnu qawmun farada llāhu ṭā'atanā*; Muḥammad al-Kulaynī, *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I (Tehran, 1376), 208, 210.

¹⁰⁰ *man 'arajanā kāna mu'minan wa man kāna ankananā kāna kāfiran wa man lam ya'rifnā wa lam yunkimā kāna ḍallan*; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 210.

a proof-text for the obligatory obedience to the Imāms.¹⁰¹ One particularly interesting report has Ja'far arguing that the Qur'ān is not a proof (*ḥujja*) without an interpreter (*qayyim*) and that since only 'Alī knew the entire Qur'ān, he was the proof after the Prophet.¹⁰² What makes this report special is that Ja'far felt compelled to remark that neither Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Umar, nor Ḥudhayfa knew the entire Qur'ān, despite their well-known erudition, something that illustrates how al-Kulaynī kept the *ṣahāba* at the margins of his text under the lock and key of his superhuman Imāms.

Should the reader of *Uṣūl al-kāfi* remain unconvinced of the religious obligation upon Muslims to obey the Imāms from these seventeen reports, she is in store for an even larger surprise in the chapter elucidating the pillars (*da'ā'im*) of Islam. The primary report used in this section is a modification of Ibn 'Umar's famous *ḥadīth*:

Islām has been built upon five [pillars]: testifying that there is no god but Allāh and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh, performing the prayers, paying *zakāt*, making the pilgrimage to the House, and fasting Ramaḍān.¹⁰³

This report is transmitted by Muḥammad al-Bāqir as follows:

Islam has been built upon five [pillars]: prayers, *zakāt*, fasting, pilgrimage, and the *walāya*—nobody will be questioned about anything as severely as they will be questioned about the *walāya*!¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 209–12. An influential Sunnī explanation of this verse can be found in al-Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-bayān fi tafsīr āy al-Qur'ān*, V (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1989 [reprint of the 1325 Būlāq edition]), 93–5. The four possible interpretations of "you who are in authority" (*ūlī l-amr*) mentioned by al-Ṭabarī are 1) the commanders (*umarā'*), 2) men of religious knowledge (*ilm* and *fiqh*), 3) Companions of Muḥammad, and 4) Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Al-Ṭabarī provides virtually no reports in support of the latter two positions and prefers the first opinion (commanders) to whom he also refers as "Imāms" because "it is known that those to whom God obliges obedience who possess our command are the Imāms and those whom Muslims entrust among the people [to lead];" *wa kāna ma'lūman anna lladhina amara bi-ṭā'atihim ta'ālā dhikruhu min dhawī amrinā hum al-a'imma wa man wallāhu l-muslimūna dīna ghayrihim min al-nās*; *ibid.*, V, 95.

¹⁰² *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 211–2.

¹⁰³ *An-Nawawī's Forty Hadith*, 34–5. This *ḥadīth* is found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. The Arabic is *buniya l-islāmu 'alā l-khamsin: shahādati an lā ilāha illā llāhu wa anna Muḥammadan rasūlu llāhi wa iqāmi l-ṣalāti wa ilā'i l-zakāti wa ḥajji l-bayti wa ṣawmi Ramaḍān*.

¹⁰⁴ *buniya l-islāmu 'alā khamsin: 'alā l-ṣalāti wa l-zakāti wa l-ṣawm, wa l-ḥajji wa l-walāyati wa lam yunāda bi-shay'in kamā nūdiya bi-l-walāya*; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, II, 42–5. These sentences occur in five reports. Momen observes that the term *walāya* (or *wilāya*) is "one of the most difficult Islamic terms to translate" and he interprets it to mean

Despite the fact that Ja'far al-Šādiq is reported as whittling the pillars down to three or four in various reports,¹⁰⁵ the message between these two Imāms is clear: a prerequisite of faith is the recognition of the Imāms.¹⁰⁶

Rather than relying upon forged prophetic *ḥadīth*, al-Kulaynī employs reports on the authority of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and his son Ja'far to offer a radical interpretation of the Qur'ān itself in support of the supernatural essence of the Imāms. We learn that the Imāms are the witnesses of God against His creatures,¹⁰⁷ guides,¹⁰⁸ representatives (*khulafā'*),¹⁰⁹ the light of God,¹¹⁰ signposts (*alāmāt*),¹¹¹ signs (*āyāt*),¹¹² and the experts in knowledge (*rāsikhūn fī l-ilm*).¹¹³ Their knowledge includes all of the revealed books,¹¹⁴ all of the disciplines that come from angels, prophets, and messengers,¹¹⁵ their respective

that the Imām is "concerned primarily with the inner or esoteric aspects of religion . . . at one and the same time, master and friend in the journey of the spirit," *An Introduction to Shī'ī Islam*, 157. In reports such as this one, *walāya* refers to the Imāmate of 'Alī and his designated successors.

¹⁰⁵ The three pillars are prayer, alms, and *walāya*, while the reports with four reinstate the *shahāda*, and include alms, "that which Muḥammad received from God," and the *walāya*; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, II, 42–5.

¹⁰⁶ This is stated explicitly in a long report of Muḥammad Bāqir; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, II, 42–4. Once again, a famous *ḥadīth* transmitted by Ibn 'Umar is given new meaning with a twist: "whoever dies without knowledge of the Imām dies in a state of pre-Islamic ignorance" (*man māta wa lā ya'rifu imāmahu māta mitalan jāhiliyyatan*). The presumably original Ibn 'Umar *ḥadīth* is found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim: *man khala'a yadan min fā'atin laqiya llāha yawma l-qiyāma l-hujjata lahu, wa man māta wa laysa fī 'unuqihi bay'atun, māta mitalatan jāhiliyya*; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XII, 201. The setting of Ibn 'Umar's *ḥadīth* indicates that it was first uttered at the time of the Battle of Ḥarra (63/683).

¹⁰⁷ Qur'ān 2:143; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 212–4. Note that many of these interpretations are cited in Momen, *An Introduction to Shī'ī Islam*, 151–3.

¹⁰⁸ Qur'ān 13:7; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 214–5.

¹⁰⁹ Qur'ān 24:55; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 216–7.

¹¹⁰ Qur'ān, 24:35; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 217–20. This section includes an extravagant example of Shī'ī exegesis: the light is 'Alī, the niche and the bright light (*kawwakb duriyy*) are Fāṭima, the lantern (*miṣbāḥ*) is al-Ḥasan and the glass is al-Ḥusayn. The expression "neither East nor West" means "neither Jews nor Christians" and "light on light" means Imām after Imām. Furthermore, the darkness in verse 24:40 refers to Abū Bakr and 'Umar (*al-awwalu wa ṣāhibuhu*), the wave to 'Uthmān (*al-thālith*), and the waves of darkness that follow are Mu'āwiya and the trials (*fitan*) of Banū Umayya.

¹¹¹ Qur'ān 16:16; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 231–2.

¹¹² Qur'ān 10:101; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 232.

¹¹³ Qur'ān 3:7; *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 238–9.

¹¹⁴ *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 253–4.

¹¹⁵ *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 281–2.

times of death,¹¹⁶ and all that has and will happen.¹¹⁷ Finally, they are the sole people who have perfect knowledge of the Qur'ān,¹¹⁸ and Ja'far indicates in one report that it is the Book of God that gives them knowledge of "all in the skies, earth, Heaven, Hell, past and future."¹¹⁹

Al-Kulaynī's strategy for dismissing the *ṣaḥāba* and the entire *ḥadīth* enterprise is unwritten yet obvious: with super-human Imāms who know everything and to whom obedience is an obligatory pillar of Islam, who has time for the unsophisticated Companions of the Prophet? Even the extraordinary *muhaddath* Salmān al-Fārisī is but a grain of sand next to the ocean of the Imāms. Al-Kulaynī does not even have to resort to the historiographical trick played al-Kashshī, namely to state that *rida* refers to the apostasy of all but three *ṣaḥāba* instead of the Bedouin tribes who fought Abū Bakr to avoid taxation. Rather, through a combination of Imāmī locutions, Qur'ānic exegesis, and the customization of a Sunnī *ḥadīth*, al-Kulaynī expels all of the *ṣaḥāba*, including those who were loyal to the point of death in support of 'Alī, to the remotest margins of the discourse. Traces of this practice of outright suppression of the *ṣaḥāba*, perfected by al-Kulaynī, can be found even today in Modarressi's *Crisis and Consolidation*, despite the author's clear hostility towards the *mufawwiḍa* in general.¹²⁰ Al-Kashshī's willingness to praise a dozen *ṣaḥāba* appears now to be a liberal Imāmī Shī'ī view, relative to al-Kulaynī's *tour de force*, although his radical interpretation of *rida* does not appear to have been seriously challenged by the Imāmī Shī'a and remains one of its most caustic differences from the Sunnīs to this day.

¹¹⁶ *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 285–7.

¹¹⁷ *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 287–9.

¹¹⁸ *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 254–6.

¹¹⁹ *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, I, 287–8. Ja'far's argument is based upon a paraphrase of Sūrat al-Nahl (16):89: "Everything is clarified in [the Book of God]" (*fīhi tibyanu kulli shay'in*).

¹²⁰ Modarressi clearly does not want to talk about the first century in his book, thus avoiding the dicey question of the nature of the *ṣaḥāba*. Note how he does not even mention 'Umar by name in connection with the Islamic conquests; *Crisis and Consolidation*, 3. This avoidance of the *ṣaḥāba* is also found in Momen's *An Introduction to Shī'ī Islam*.

VI.3.3 *The Zaydiyya/Baghdādī Mu'tazila and the ṣaḥāba*

The two major issues pertaining to the *ṣaḥāba* that receive a significant amount of attention in the early works of the Zaydiyya and Baghdādī Mu'tazila are the superiority of 'Alī to Abū Bakr and the status of those Companions who opposed him during his counter-caliphate. These two groups adopted similar positions for both issues and the early heresiographer al-Malaṭī (d. 377/987–8) explicitly identified the Baghdādī Mu'tazila as a group of the Zaydiyya.¹²¹ Al-Jāḥiẓ reports an argument for the superiority of 'Alī to Abū Bakr by an anonymous group of Zaydī 'ulamā' that is virtually identical to the one associated with the Baghdādī Mu'tazilī Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir, namely that "merit is determined solely by actions" and 'Alī was the only *ṣaḥābī* who was considered among the best men in the four categories of early conversion, asceticism, religious knowledge (*fiqh*), and warfare (*al-mashī bi-l-sayf*).¹²² I shall treat each of these groups independently here and begin with the Zaydiyya since it has successfully outlived the demise of the Baghdādī school of the Mu'tazila.¹²³

The Zaydī positions of the superiority of 'Alī to Abū Bakr and the acceptance of the authority of the vast majority of the *ṣaḥāba* has been recorded dutifully by Western scholars for over a century. Both Goldziher's observation that "the Zaydīs are tolerant in their judgment of the Sunnī caliphate of the early Islamic age" and Watt's assertion that "to give an adequate account of the Zaydites is more difficult than to describe any other of the Islamic sects" remain true to this day.¹²⁴ The difficulty to which Watt alludes is the necessity

¹²¹ Abū l-Husayn al-Malaṭī, *al-Tanbīh wa l-radd 'alā ahl al-ahwā' wa l-bida'*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kawtharī (Baghdad, 1968), 34–5. Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, about whom we will have more to say shortly, also declares the Baghdādī Mu'tazila to be the "original" Shī'a, namely men who were partisans of 'Alī and opponents of his adversaries; see his book *Sharḥ naḥj al-balāgha*, ed. Ḥusayn al-A'lamī, XX (Beirut, 1995), 405.

¹²² *wajadnā l-fadla fī l-fīli dūna ghayriḥ*; al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasā'il al-Jāḥiẓ*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Ḥārūn, IV (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1979), 311–4. 'Alī's competitors for earliest conversion are Abū Bakr, Zayd b. Ḥāritha, and Khabbāb; for asceticism: Abū l-Dardā', Mu'adh b. Jabal, Abū Dharr, 'Ammār, Bilāl, and 'Uthmān b. Maz'un; for *fiqh*: 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd, Zayd b. Thābit, and Ubayy b. Ka'b; and for warfare: al-Zubayr, Ibn 'Afrā', Muḥammad b. Maslama, Ṭalḥa, and al-Barā' b. Mālīk.

¹²³ It is not clear exactly when the Baghdādī school of Mu'tazila vanished; one of the final famous Baghdādī Mu'tazila in the classical period was the recently mentioned Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258).

¹²⁴ Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, translated by Andras

of the researcher of the Zaydiyya to synthesize a host of 'Alid revolts, sub-sects mentioned in the *firaq* literature, a significant body of material found only in manuscripts, and three arenas of action, namely Kufa, the southern Caspian provinces, and Yemen into a coherent narrative. While Madelung has provided a great service by analyzing the adoption of Mu'tazilī theology by the Zaydī Imāms of the early and classical periods, as well as by editing texts concerning the history of the Caspian Zaydī principalities, the fields of Zaydī *ḥadīth* literature and jurisprudence remain largely unexplored by modern scholars. Despite the challenges inherent in the study of the Zaydiyya, a pair of articles have addressed the question of the *ṣaḥāba* in the Zaydī conscience and a few observations about two classical Zaydī *ḥadīth* books will be offered.

Etan Kohlberg identifies four distinct Zaydī attitudes towards the *ṣaḥāba* in general and different degrees of hostility towards 'Alī's adversaries at the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffin.¹²⁵ One group, the partisans of Sulaymān b. Jarīr, employed the argument that the early *ṣaḥāba* relied upon *ijtihād* and were thus exempt from error in their decisions to support candidates other than 'Alī.¹²⁶ The three other Zaydī opinions ranged from withholding judgment, accusing the *ṣaḥāba* of error (*khaṭa'*) but not sin (*fiṣq*), and finally considering the opponents of 'Alī as having "gone astray like a blind camel."¹²⁷ Kohlberg reports that the pioneering Zaydī Imām al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm (d. 246/860) was relatively harsh towards the *ṣaḥāba* and that his grandson al-Ḥādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 298/911) even declared that Abū Bakr and 'Umar deserved the death penalty for passing over 'Alī.¹²⁸ The majority of the Zaydiyya consider the rebellion of 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥa, and al-Zubayr to have been an error and sin, while

and Ruth Hamori (Princeton, 1981 [1910]) 218; Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, 162.

¹²⁵ Etan Kohlberg, "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," *BSOAS*, 39/1 (1976), 91–8.

¹²⁶ "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," 92.

¹²⁷ "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," 92–3. Note that these same three attitudes are mirrored in the Zaydī reactions to Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān's rejection of 'Alī's superiority (p. 94).

¹²⁸ "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," 94. Binyamin Abrahamov remarks that there is not any evidence of al-Qāsim's illegitimation of Abū Bakr and 'Umar in his writings on the Imāmate, although his argument is one drawn largely from silence; "al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm's theory of the Imāmate," *Arabica*, XXXIV (1987), 80–105.

simultaneously holding the belief that these three individuals died in a state of repentance, while the minority holds that they died in error.¹²⁹ Kohlberg remarks that "Mu'āwiya is painted in very dark colors" as either a grave sinner or disbeliever, and the ninth/fifteenth century Imām Ibn al-Murtaḍā states that only the Ḥashwiyya (Sunnīs) consider his repentance sincere.¹³⁰ Finally, the most sinister *ṣaḥābī* in the Zaydī works examined by Kohlberg is al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba, who is blamed for arranging the usurpation of 'Alī's authority from the very beginning of post-prophetic Islamic civilization.¹³¹ Despite the fact that the vast majority of Zaydī texts that describe the *ṣaḥāba* were composed long after the third/ninth century, there is a clear continuity between the positions found in the early, non-Zaydī historiographical works, and the later Zaydī books that indicates a genuine reluctance to calumniate any *ṣaḥābī* among the Muhājirūn and Anṣār even if they did not support their hero 'Alī in his wars.¹³²

Perhaps the most interesting dimension of the Zaydī attitudes towards the *ṣaḥāba* can be found in the incorporation of a significant amount of Sunnī *ḥadīth* in their *ḥadīth* literature. Madelung has observed that one of the earliest Zaydī *ḥadīth* books, the *Amālī Aḥmad b. 'Īsā* compiled by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Murādī al-Kūfī (d. second half of third/ninth century) includes a large number of reports from descendants of 'Alī as well as material from Ibn 'Abbās and 'Ā'isha.¹³³ The most significant Zaydī *ḥadīth* book, accord-

¹²⁹ "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," 95–6. This is also reported by Ibn al-Murtaḍā in the *Muqaddima* of *Kitāb al-baḥr al-zakḥkhār* (San'ā': Dār al-Ḥikma al-Yamāniyya, 1988), 95. Ibn al-Murtaḍā also flatly rejects in this passage Sulaymān b. Jarīr's opinion that any revolt against an Imām constitutes *kufī*.

¹³⁰ "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," 96; Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *Muqaddima*, 95.

¹³¹ "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," 95. Kohlberg says that the extreme vilification of al-Mughīra is unique to the Zaydiyya.

¹³² The willingness to attack Mu'āwiya and al-Mughīra may have been due to the classic Zaydī definition of a *ṣaḥābī* as someone who has "spent a considerable amount of time with the Prophet and followed his laws" (*al-ṣaḥābī man tālat majālisat-uhū iyyāhu muttabi'an li-shar'ih*); Ibn al-Murtaḍā, *al-Muqaddima*, 180. This is a significant departure from the Sunnī definition that we encountered in Ibn al-Ṣalāh's *Muqaddima* that anyone who meets the Prophet is a *ṣaḥābī*, and Ibn al-Murtaḍā explicitly argues that "meeting is not companionship linguistically, legally, or by custom" (*al-lāqī laysa bi-ṣāhibin lughatan wa lā shar'an wa lā 'urfan*); *ibid.*, 180. Thus, it is not clear whether either al-Mughīra or Mu'āwiya would qualify as *ṣaḥāba* in the eyes of the Zaydiyya in the first place.

¹³³ Madelung, *Der Imam al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1965),

ing to Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Wazīr (d. 914/1508), is the six volume *al-Jāmi' al-kāfi* by Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-'Alawī al-Kūfī (d. 445/1053–4) and includes "*ḥadīth, āthār*, locutions of the *ṣaḥāba* and *tābi'ūn*, and the opinions of the Prophet's family (*'itra*)."¹³⁴ The Caspian Imāms al-Mu'ayyid bi-llāh Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Hārūn (d. 421/1030), Abū Ṭālib Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn b. Hārūn (d. 424/1033), and al-Murshid bi-llāh Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Shajara (d. 499/1105–6) all composed *ḥadīth* books called *amālī* ("dictations") that were arranged thematically by Yemeni scholars of the following centuries.¹³⁵ A cursory examination of Abū Ṭālib's *Amālī* reveals that the Imām heard many *ḥadīth* from the master Sunnī critic Ibn 'Adī and that a significant percentage of the reports are on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, something that comes as a surprise given Ibn 'Umar's initial reluctance to give 'Alī the *bay'a*. Abū Hurayra is conspicuously absent from these reports, but other prolific *ṣaḥāba* such as Anas b. Mālik, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, and Jābir b. 'Abdullāh are all present, as well as, of course, 'Alī. Imām Abū Ṭālib's *ḥadīth* book is, in short, an eloquent testimony to Kohlberg's observation that the general acceptance of the probity of most *ṣaḥāba* "enabled

82–3. Madelung mentions that there are also reports from prominent Iraqis such as Ibn Abī Laylā, Abū Hanīfā, and Sufyān al-Thawrī. Furthermore, he remarks that this book contains reports solely of a legal nature and that none of them discuss theological topics. The *Amālī Aḥmad b. 'Īsā* has been published twice, according to the Yemeni scholar Muḥammad 'Azzān, but does not appear to be available in the United States according to World Cat. A manuscript copy is preserved in the Ambrosiana Library in Milan (H 135); see GAS I, 560–1.

¹³⁴ Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Wazīr, *al-Falak al-dawwār fī 'ulūm al-ḥadīth wa l-fiqh wa l-āthār*, ed. Muḥammad 'Azzān (San'ā' and Sa'da, 1994), 59–60. Abū 'Abdullāh al-'Alawī receives a short notice in *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* (XVII, 636–7) in which al-Dhababī praises him as Imām, *thiqa*, *ḥafīz* and *'Musnid al-Kufa'*. He also remarks that the master *ḥadīth* scholar al-Ṣūfī made and abridgement of his work and praised him highly. Abū 'Abdullāh's *al-Jāmi' al-kāfi* survives in manuscript; see Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, Supplement, I (Leiden, 1937–42), 318, 698.

¹³⁵ Two of these books have been published without any editorial niceties: *Taysīr al-maṭālib fī amālī al-imām Abī Ṭālib* (Beirut, 1975) was arranged into sixty-two chapters by the Yemeni al-Qāḍī Ja'far b. Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Salām (d. 573/1177–8) who studied in Kufa and Mecca and is reported to have brought al-Zamakhsharī's famous Qur'ān commentary *al-Kashshāf* to Yemen as well; and *Kitāb al-amālī al-shahīra bi-l-amālī al-khamīsiyya* (Beirut, no date) that was arranged into forty chapters by al-Qāḍī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurashī (d. 623/1226) who settled in Hūth (midway between San'ā' and Sa'da). The first *ḥadīth* of this latter book is, perhaps not coincidentally, the same famous *ḥadīth* on the authority of 'Umar that opens al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīh*: "Truly actions are done by intentions and to every man belongs what he has intended. . . ."

the Zaydiyya to accept Sunnī traditions without compromising the special status enjoyed by the *ahl al-bayt*.¹³⁶

While the three major Zaydī Imāms of the third/ninth century whose works have been published have very little to say about the *ṣaḥāba*,¹³⁷ two early Baghdādī Muʿtazila help fill this lacuna. Abū Jaʿfar al-Iskāfī (d. 240/854–5) can be found in the twelfth *ṭabaqa* in the Muʿtazilī ghetto of *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* mentioned in the previous chapter and we are fortunate to have both his refutations to al-Jāhīz's book *al-Uthmāniyya* as well as his son Abū Muḥammad Jaʿfar's book *al-Miʿyār wa l-muwāzana* published.¹³⁸ These two works, which deal almost exclusively with the argument for the superiority of ʿAlī over Abū Bakr, will be supplemented by a discussion of twenty *ṣaḥāba* who turned away from (*munḥarif*) ʿAlī according to the opinions of scholars of the Baghdādī Muʿtazila preserved in Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd's *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*. Although the Baghdādī Muʿtazila neither composed any major *ḥadīth* books nor survived as an independent theological school, their opinions are significant for our study because they were most likely adopted by the Zaydiyya (along with their theology) and may have influenced the fifth/eleventh century Zaydī *ḥadīth* books that were just mentioned.

Abū Jaʿfar al-Iskāfī's refutations of selected arguments put forth by al-Jāhīz in *al-Uthmāniyya* are aimed not at denying the merits of the *ṣaḥāba* in general, but at denying that any of the *ṣaḥāba* were superior to ʿAlī.¹³⁹ Five topics occupy al-Iskāfī's attention. The first is the question of precedence in conversion to Islam, and Abū Jaʿfar amasses thirty-one reports, most of which have "Sunnī" *isnāds*, as well as some verses of poetry that argue in favor of ʿAlī.¹⁴⁰ A corol-

¹³⁶ "Some Zaydī Views of the Companions of the Prophet," 98.

¹³⁷ These three Zaydī Imāms are al-Qāsim b. Ibrāhīm, al-Ḥasan b. Zayd (d. 270/884), and al-Ḥādī Yahyā b. al-Husayn.

¹³⁸ Al-Iskāfī's remarks were extracted from *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha* and arranged carefully by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Salām Ḥārūn at the end of his edition of Jāhīz's *al-Uthmāniyya*. While the editor of *al-Miʿyār wa l-muwāzana* claims that it is a work of al-Iskāfī, Modarressi corrects the attribution to his son Jaʿfar. A discussion of several refutations of al-Jāhīz's *al-Uthmāniyya* can be found in Asma Afsaruddin, *Excellence and Precedence: Medieval Islamic Discourse on Legitimate Leadership* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 23–5.

¹³⁹ *innā lā nunkiru fadla l-ṣaḥāba wa sawābiqahum . . . wa lākinmanā nunkiru tafḍila aḥādī l-ṣaḥāba ʿalā ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, al-Jāhīz, *al-Uthmāniyya* (Cairo, 1955), 318.

¹⁴⁰ *Al-Uthmāniyya*, 287–93. The poetry seems quite tendentious; did Abū Sufyān really say "I never thought that the leadership (*amr*) would leave Banū Hāshim or Abū Ḥasan (ʿAlī)/Was he not the first to pray in the direction of their *qibla* and

lary to this argument is the assertion that ʿAlī was not a mere child following the Prophet's command but rather possessed a rational faculty and made a conscious choice to enter Islam. Abū Jaʿfar mentions five opinions concerning the age of ʿAlī at his conversion, ranging from nine to fifteen and argues that the minimal age for a boy to achieve rationality is ten, which, coincidentally, was the age of Ibn ʿAbbās when the Prophet died.¹⁴¹ The second topic is the argument that ʿAlī's emigration was more dangerous than that of Abū Bakr, and a third one is ʿAlī's well-known military superiority to him.¹⁴² Abū Jaʿfar seeks to debunk the "myth" that Abū Bakr was a great proselytizer by remarking that he was unsuccessful at converting his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, his father, his mother, his wife Namla, or his pupil Jubayr b. Muṭʿim and that Muṣʿab b. ʿUmayr, Saʿd b. Muʿadh, and Burayda b. Ḥabīb were far superior to him in this respect.¹⁴³ The final "myth" that al-Iskāfī seeks to shatter is that of Abū Bakr's generosity, since he argues that it was actually the Prophet who freed Bilāl and ʿĀmir b. Fuhayra, and that Abū Bakr's support of his family was nothing meritorious since it was obligatory.

Abū Jaʿfar's son, Ibn al-Iskāfī, provides even lengthier arguments for the superiority of ʿAlī to Abū Bakr than his father and exposes contradictions within the opinions of the Muslim masses, the Sunnīs (*ʿamma*). Ibn al-Iskāfī questions why the only proof offered for Abū Bakr's superiority is a single widespread report on the authority of Ibn ʿUmar, while the reports from Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, Salmān al-Fārisī, and ʿAmmār are ignored.¹⁴⁴ He also observes that several

the most knowledgeable of the laws and practices?" *mā kuntu aḥsabu an al-amra munṣarifun ʿan Hāshimīn thumma minhā ʿan Abī Ḥasani/a-laysa awwala man ṣallā li-qiblatihim wa aʿlama l-nāsi bi-l-aḥkāmi wa l-sunani?* (*ibid.*, 294).

¹⁴¹ *Al-Uthmāniyya*, 295–9. The five opinions are 15 (al-ʿAwzāʿī, Qatāda), 14 (Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān), 11 (Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq and his father), 10 (Ibn Ishāq), and 9 (al-Shaʿbī). Note that al-Wāqidi puts the age of Ibn ʿAbbās at the death of the Prophet at 13, but Saʿīd b. Manṣūr and Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī quote sources who put it at ten years old; *TK* 2001, VI, 321.

¹⁴² *Al-Uthmāniyya*, 310–11; 327–39. ʿAlī's primary feats are his inclusion among the five who defended the Prophet at Uhud and his duel with ʿAmr b. ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbd Wudd at al-Khandaq.

¹⁴³ *Al-Uthmāniyya*, 313–6. Abū Jaʿfar even questions the authenticity of the reports that Abū Bakr converted Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, al-Zubayr, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, who were not his friends prior to Islam, in light of his failure to convert his friend ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.

¹⁴⁴ Ibn al-Iskāfī, *al-Miʿyār wa l-muwāzana* (Beirut, 1981), 20. Ibn ʿUmar's report that "we would favor Abū Bakr, then ʿUmar, then ʿUthmān at the time of the Prophet," is found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī but not that of Muslim; it is also the

prominent *ṣaḥāba*, such as 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Ibn 'Umar, Muḥammad b. Maslama, and Usāma b. Zayd, did not give 'Alī the *bay'a*, and were opposed to 'Uthmān's practices.¹⁴⁵ Another criticism raised by opponents of 'Alī, namely his willingness to shed Muslim blood, in contrast to 'Uthmān's reluctance to do so in order to save his own life, is cleverly refuted by the argument that Abū Bakr shed Muslim blood in the *ridda*, and so if 'Uthmān's position was correct, then Abū Bakr's must be wrong.¹⁴⁶ Finally, Ibn al-Iskāfī's greatest coup in defense of his position that Abū Bakr was not the greatest *ṣaḥābī* is Abū Bakr's own locution "O you! I am not the best among you" at the Saqifa, an explicit text that Sunnī scholars have had to interpret creatively for centuries.¹⁴⁷

A particularly insightful dimension of Ibn al-Iskāfī's polemic is directed against those who deny the legitimacy of 'Alī's caliphate due to the abstention of the group of *ṣaḥāba* whom I have mentioned earlier in this chapter. How is it, he asks, that Abū Bakr's *bay'a* was considered complete by just the allegiance of 'Umar and Abū 'Ubayda when Sa'd b. 'Ubbāda had already received his own *bay'a* from a group of the Anṣār? Likewise, how could 'Umar's *bay'a* be superior to 'Alī's when the former was appointed by Abū Bakr and 'Alī was elected by a *shūrā*? And, finally, how could 'Uthmān's *shūrā* be superior to 'Alī's given that the former consisted of only six Muhājirūn whereas the latter's consisted of numerous Muhājirūn and Anṣār? While these arguments are far from flawless,¹⁴⁸ they do

primary report used by Ibn Ḥanbal to justify this sequence, according to Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923) in *Kitāb al-sunna*, I (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1994), 371, 401–2. In fact, al-Khallāl devotes an entire chapter to this *ḥadīth*; *ibid.*, I, 396–410.

¹⁴⁵ *Al-Mi'yār wa l-muwāzana*, 21–2. Just to be safe, Ibn al-Iskāfī finds a more prominent 'Alī-supporter for each of these anti-'Alī *ṣaḥāba*: Umm Salama opposed 'Ā'isha's trip to Basra; Ibn 'Abbās was superior to Ibn 'Umar; Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr actually gave the *bay'a* to 'Alī and then violated it; Salmān was superior to Muḥammad b. Maslama; and 'Ammār was greater than Usāma. Ibn al-Iskāfī wisely chose to ignore Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ's failure to pledge allegiance to 'Alī, probably because there were not any other members of the *shūrā* that selected 'Uthmān who supported 'Alī, except, of course, 'Alī himself.

¹⁴⁶ *Al-Mi'yār wa l-muwāzana*, 33–4. Ibn al-Iskāfī also raises the point, noted by Madelung, that most of the *ṣaḥāba* did not feel that the refusal to pay *zakāt* constituted apostasy *pace* Abū Bakr; *ibid.*, 35.

¹⁴⁷ *wa laytakum wa lastu bi-khayrikum*; *al-Mi'yār wa l-muwāzana*, 39–40. Ibn al-Iskāfī refutes three apologetic interpretations of this statement present in his own day: 1) Abū Bakr was referring to his genealogy (*nasab*); 2) he was referring to his religion (*dīn*); 3) he was being modest (*tawādu'*).

¹⁴⁸ For example, he does not address the numerous reports that have al-Ashtar

indicate the "popular" nature of the selection of 'Alī that took place without careful manipulation by the Quraysh and Muhājirūn.

The greater part of *al-Mi'yār wa l-muwāzana* is devoted to extolling the virtues of 'Alī, largely without comparison to other *ṣaḥāba*. Ibn al-Iskāfī identifies five virtues, four of which he supports with Qur'ānic proof texts, all of which were found in his hero 'Alī. These virtues are knowledge of God and His religion, early conversion (*taqdim*) to Islam, warfare (*jihād*) against enemies, patience in adversity, and pious asceticism.¹⁴⁹ Ibn al-Iskāfī demonstrates 'Alī's excellence in all of these categories on the basis of a large number of speeches attributed to him, many of which the editor of *al-Mi'yār wa l-muwāzana* was able to identify in Sharīf al-Rāḍī's fifth/eleventh century compilation *Nahj al-balāgha*. While it is impossible to gauge the impact of Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī and his son upon their third/ninth century contemporaries, the efforts of these two men to strike a balance between those who rejected the legitimacy of 'Alī and those who practically deified him was a uniquely moderate position that was overwhelmed by the Sunnī insistence upon 'Alī's status as the fourth greatest *ṣaḥābī* and survived only among the Zaydiyya in the long run.¹⁵⁰

Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd's collation of twenty *ṣaḥāba* who opposed 'Alī from lost texts of earlier Baghdadī Mu'tazila, including al-Iskāfī, is significant for its identification of men whose probity was considered questionable with regard to religious issues. Three of these men—Abū Hurayra, 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, and al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba—are accused explicitly of forging anti-'Alī *ḥadīth* for Mu'āwiya, while Samura b. Jundab is reported to have received a large bribe from Mu'āwiya to interpret the following Qur'ānic verses as a reference to 'Alī:

And of mankind there is he whose conversation on the life of this world pleases you (Muḥammad), and he calls Allāh to witness as to what is in his heart; yet he is the most rigid of opponents. And when

and his sword as the primary forces behind 'Alī's *bay'a*; likewise, his argument that Abū Bakr's *bay'a* was conducted in haste to prevent greater civil strife could also apply to 'Alī's election.

¹⁴⁹ *Al-Mi'yār wa l-muwāzana*, 63–5. These virtues are supported by the following Qur'ānic verses: 39:9, 13:19, 35:28 (knowledge); 57:10 (precedence in Islam); 4:95, 9:111 (warfare); 2:177, 3:200 (patience); none (asceticism).

¹⁵⁰ Note Ibn al-Iskāfī's identification of the parallel between Jesus and 'Alī in their respective religious traditions: while the Christians and Rāfiḍa deified their respective leaders, the Jews and Nuṣṣāb (anti-'Alī proto-Sunnīs) rejected them; *al-Mi'yār wa l-muwāzana*, 31–2.

he turns away (from you) his effort in the land is to make mischief therein and to destroy the crops and the cattle; and Allāh loves not mischief.¹⁵¹

Abū Hurayra fares particularly badly in this section, as no less than seven authorities ranging from ‘Umar to Abū Ḥanīfa to Ibn Qutayba, are brought forth who question his reliability as a narrator of *ḥadīth*.¹⁵² Seven *ṣaḥāba* are also reported as being cursed by ‘Alī on a regular basis in his *qunūt*,¹⁵³ and Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd mentions the suffering endured by Anas b. Mālik and Zayd b. Arqam after their refusal to testify to the veracity of the Prophet’s speech at Ghadīr Khumm.¹⁵⁴ The remaining nine anti-‘Alī *ṣaḥāba* identified by Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd share the additional common characteristics of having converted to Islam after the Battle of Badr and lived well into the early decades of the Umayyad dynasty.¹⁵⁵ Particularly striking is the absence from this list of the prominent Muhājirūn who opposed ‘Alī, such as Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, or Sa’d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, as well as ‘Ā’isha, something which indicates that the Baghdādī Mu’tazila accepted their repentance (or martyrdom) after the Battle of the Camel as sincere.

The attitude of the Zaydiyya and Baghdādī Mu’tazila towards the *ṣaḥāba* is of primary interest for this project because it was a mod-

¹⁵¹ Ibn Abī l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, IV, 283 and 289. The accuser in both cases is none other than Abū Ja’far al-Iskāfī; the Qur’ānic verses in question are 2:204–5.

¹⁵² *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, IV, 285–7.

¹⁵³ These men are Abū Mūsā l-Ash’arī, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, Busr b. Abī Arṭā’a, Ḥabīb b. Maslama, Mu’āwiya, al-Mughīra b. Shu’ba, and al-Walīd b. ‘Uqba; *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, IV, 294. The *qunūt* is non-obligatory supplication said aloud during the second *rak’a* of the daybreak prayer; the Prophet is reported to have cursed his enemies in his *qunūt* for a month and then abandoned this practice; see *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, V, 150–4. Al-Ṭahāwī reports that the Hanafīs, Ibn Shubrama, and Sufyān al-Thawrī do not perform *qunūt* in the daybreak prayer; Ibn Abī Laylā, Mālik and al-Ḥasan al-Ḥayy perform it prior to the *rukū’*, and al-Shāfi’ī performs it after the *rukū’*; al-Ṭahāwī/al-Jassās, *Mukhtaṣar ikhtilāf al-‘ulamā’*, I (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā’ir Islāmiyya, 1996), 215. The Imāmī Shī’ī scholar al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ḥillī (d. 676/1277) states that it is praiseworthy (*masnūn*) to perform the *qunūt* prior to the second *rukū’* during the second *rak’a* of every prayer; see his *Sharā’i’ al-Islām fī masā’il al-ḥalāl wa l-ḥarām*, I (Tehran: Intishārāt Istiqlāl, 1373–1415), 71.

¹⁵⁴ *Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha*, IV, 291. Recall that the report I cited above in al-Kashshī’s book substituted al-Barā’ b. ‘Āzib for Zayd b. Arqam.

¹⁵⁵ These men are ‘Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr (d. 73/692), Abū Mas’ūd al-Anṣārī (d. before 60/680), ‘Aqīl b. Abī Ṭālib (d. before 60), al-Ash’ath b. Qays (d. before 41/661), Ḥanzala b. al-Rabī’ al-Kātib, Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn (d. 52/672), Jarīr b. ‘Abdullah al-Bajalī, al-Nu’mān b. Bashīr, and Zayd b. Thābit.

erate path *not* taken by either the Sunnīs or the Imāmī Shī’a. The argument that ‘Alī was the greatest human after the Prophet Muḥammad on the basis of his personal qualities of religious erudition, military prowess, early embrace of Islam, and piety was unpersuasive to the majority of the Muslim Community, who insisted that only the best man could have been the first successor to the Prophet, and to the Imāmī Shī’a whose elevation of ‘Alī rested solely upon his supposedly clear designation by Muḥammad.¹⁵⁶ Their efforts to affirm the probity of all but twenty or so *ṣaḥāba*, most of whom were late converts to Islam and actively engaged in acts of defamation against ‘Alī, was seen as a threat to the historiographical visions of both parties as well. It appears to be just another accident of history that the only place where the moderate position vis-à-vis the *ṣaḥāba* advocated by the Zaydiyya and the Baghdādī Mu’tazila established deep roots was the mountainous region of northern Yemen.

VI.4 Sunnī solutions

VI.4.1 The virtues of the *ṣaḥāba*

A sensible place to discover the Sunnī harmonization between the warring *ṣaḥāba* is in the *ḥadīth* collections of the third/ninth century. The earliest extant *ḥadīth* compilation to have a chapter (*kitāb*) devoted to the virtues (*faḍā’il*) of specific individuals is the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba.¹⁵⁷ Two of Ibn Abī Shayba’s pupils, al-Bukhārī and Muslim, followed his lead and included chapters on the virtues of the *ṣaḥāba* in their *Ṣaḥīḥs*. A final third/ninth century source that I shall use merely to identify the most popular *ṣaḥāba* among the early

¹⁵⁶ Many, if not most, Zaydī scholars believed that ‘Alī was designated as well, but they did not consider the elections of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, or ‘Uthmān as sinful.

¹⁵⁷ The *Muwaṭṭa’* of Mālik contains a sub-chapter on the “virtues of Medina” and the *Muṣannaf* of ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan’ānī contains the following sub-chapters of relevance to the merits of the *ṣaḥāba* in the *kitāb al-jāmi’*: *faḍā’il Quraysh*, *faḍā’il al-Anṣār*, *zuhd al-ṣaḥāba* (mentions ‘Umar, Abū Dharr, Ibn ‘Umar, Salmān, Ḥudhayfa, dhikr ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, *azwāj al-nabī*, *maqtal* ‘Uthmān, *dhikr* al-Ḥasan b. ‘Alī; see ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, XI (Beirut, 1972), 54–65, 310–4, 317–8, 429–33, 444–50, 452–3. The twenty-seventh book of the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba is devoted to the virtues of prophets, *ṣaḥāba*, cities, tribes, and four *masājīd*; *al-Kutāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 307–420.

Sunnīs is the *Kitāb faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* that is attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal but is more accurately the work of his son 'Abdullāh.¹⁵⁸ The following sixty-three *ṣaḥāba* have been arranged according to the frequency with which they receive sub-chapters (*abwāb*) in these four books:

I. *Ṣaḥāba* receiving sub-chapters in all four sources (alphabetically arranged):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq | 11) Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib |
| 2) Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ | 12) Jarīr b. 'Abdullāh |
| 3) 'Ā'isha <i>bint</i> Abī Bakr | 13) Khadija <i>bint</i> Khuwaylid |
| 4) 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib | 14) Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ |
| 5) Fāṭima <i>bint</i> Rasūl Allāh | 15) Sa'd b. Mu'ādh |
| 6) al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī | 16) Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allāh |
| 7) al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī | 17) 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb |
| 8) Ibn 'Abbās | 18) Usāma b. Zayd |
| 9) Ibn Mas'ūd | 19) 'Uthmān b. 'Affān |
| 10) Ibn 'Umar | 20) al-Zubayr b. 'Awwām |

II. *Ṣaḥāba* receiving sub-chapters in three sources

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) al-'Abbas b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib | (absent from Muslim) |
| 2) 'Ammār b. Yāsir | (absent from Muslim) |
| 3) Bilāl b. Rabāḥ | (absent from Ibn Ḥanbal) |
| 4) Khālīd b. al-Walīd | (absent from Muslim) |
| 5) Ṣuhayb b. Sinān | (absent from Bukhārī) |
| 6) Ubayy b. Ka'b | (absent from Ibn Ḥanbal) |
| 7) Zayd b. Ḥāritha | (absent from Ibn Ḥanbal) |

III. *Ṣaḥāba* receiving sub-chapters in two sources¹⁵⁹

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| 1) 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf | (IH, IAS) |
| 2) 'Abdullāh b. Salām | (B, M) |
| 3) Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī | (M, IAS) |
| 4) Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī | (M, IAS) |
| 5) Abū Ṭalḥa Zayd b. Sāhl | (B, M) |
| 6) Mu'ādh b. Jabal | (B, IAS) |

¹⁵⁸ Since this book does not appear to have been terribly influential and was published on the basis of a single surviving manuscript, I shall be making few references to it in the following paragraphs. Furthermore, there appear to be large additions to this book by 'Abdullāh's pupil Abū Bakr al-Qaṭīrī.

¹⁵⁹ Abbreviations: B: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*; M: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*; IAS: *al-Muṣannaḥ* of Ibn Abī Shayba; IH: *Faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* of Ibn Ḥanbal.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------|
| 7) Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān | (B, IH) |
| 8) Salmān al-Fārisī | (M, IAS) |

IV. *Ṣaḥāba* receiving subchapters in one book

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1) 'Abbād b. Bishr | (B) | 15) Ḥassān b. Thābit | (M) |
| 2) 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. Ḥarām | (M) | 16) Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān | (B) |
| 3) 'Abdullāh b. Ja'far | (M) | 17) Ibn Rawāḥa, 'Abdullāh | (IAS) |
| 4) Abū 'Āmir al-Ash'arī | (M) | 18) Julaybīb | (M) |
| 5) Abū Dujāna, Simāk | (M) | 19) Muṣ'ab b. 'Umayr | (B) ¹⁶⁰ |
| 6) Abū Hurayra | (M) | 20) Sa'd b. 'Ubāda | (B) |
| 7) Abū l-Dardā' | (IAS) | 21) Sālim <i>mawla</i> Abī Ḥudhayfa | (B) |
| 8) Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī | (IAS) | 22) 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit | (IAS) |
| 9) Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb | (M) | 23) Umm Ayman | (M) |
| 10) 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ | (IH) | 24) Umm Salama | (M) |
| 11) Anas b. Mālīk | (M) | 25) Umm Sulaym | (M) |
| 12) Asmā' <i>bint</i> 'Unays | (M) | 26) Usayd b. Ḥudayr | (B) |
| 13) Ḥamza b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib | (IAS) | 27) Zayd b. Thābit | (B) |
| 14) Ḥāritha b. al-Nu'mān | (IH) | 28) Zaynab <i>bint</i> Khuzayma | (M) |

Several of the primary actors in the early civil strife who were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter receive special attention in at least one of the four sources. Sa'd b. 'Ubāda, the abused Khazrajī leader who never gave the *bay'a* to Abū Bakr nor 'Umar, enjoys a subchapter in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, while the anti-'Alī companions Zayd b. Thābit, Ḥassān b. Thābit, and 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ all receive recognition in only one of the four sources. There are sub-chapters for the anti-'Alī *ṣaḥāba* 'Abdullāh b. Salām and Mu'āwiya, the neutral Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī, and the pro-'Alī Salmān al-Fārisī and Abū Dharr in half of the sources, and the martyred 'Ammār b. Yāsir in three of them. It is striking that the vast majority of *ṣaḥāba* affiliated with the immediate internecine conflict of the post-prophetic Muslim Community, however, do *not* receive special recognition in these four

¹⁶⁰ This is the only case among these *ṣaḥāba* in which a sub-chapter was made by al-Bukhārī but he did not actually include any *ḥadīth* in it; *Faḥḥ al-bārī*, VII, 463.

ḥadīth books, and this suggests that the collection of the *ṣaḍā'il ḥadīth* played a limited role in the Sunnī affirmation of the collective prophy of the *ṣaḥāba*.

The twenty *ṣaḥāba* who receive sub-chapters in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf*, and *Kitāb ṣaḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* are a most interesting lot for this study. Six of them are close blood relatives of the Prophet Muḥammad—his daughter Fāṭima,¹⁶¹ grandsons al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn,¹⁶² and first cousins 'Alī and Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib,¹⁶³ and 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās¹⁶⁴—a finding that supports Madelung's argument of the primacy of the Prophet's family among early Muslims.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Fāṭima's merits include al-Miswar b. Makhrama's report that the Prophet said "Fāṭima is a part (*biḍ'a*) of me and whoever angers her angers me" (*Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 443, 476), which, according to Muslim's variants, was the reason why the Prophet forbade 'Alī to take a second wife while he was married to her; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XVI, 3–4. Fāṭima is also reported to have been questioned by 'Ā'isha as to why she wept and then laughed during her meeting with her father while he was on his deathbed. While the *ḥadīth* in both the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim attributes her tears to the news of the Prophet's impending death, the version transmitted by 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr attributes her laughter to his prediction that she will be the first of the *ahl al-bayt* to join him, and that of Masrūq attributes it to his declaration that she is the "First lady of the believing women" (*sayyidat nisā' al-mu'minīn*) or the "First lady of the women of the Muslim Community (*umma*). The 'Urwa version is in *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 443 and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XVI, 5, while the Masrūq transmission is found only in the latter (*ibid.*).

¹⁶² Al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn are invariably grouped together in one sub-chapter and both al-Bukhārī and Muslim stress the Prophet's love for his grandchildren in several *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Hurayra, al-Barā' b. 'Azib, and Usāma b. Zayd; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 464; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 156–7. Al-Bukhārī also includes reports from Abū Bakr and Anas that al-Ḥasan most resembled the Prophet, as well as another report from Anas that al-Ḥusayn most resembled his grandfather; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 464.

¹⁶³ Al-Bukhārī reports on the authority of Abū Hurayra that Ja'far was particularly generous to poor folk, and that Ibn 'Umar would say "peace be upon you, son of the possessor of two wings" to 'Abdullāh b. Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 499–500. Muslim includes a lengthy report on the authority of Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī and Asmā' of his leadership role in the return of the ship of Muhājirūn who left for Abyssinia prior to the Hijra and returned in 7/629 while the Prophet and his army were at Khaybar; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XVI, 53–4.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Bukhārī has two variants of a *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet says "O God teach him wisdom (*al-hikma*)" and "O God teach him the Book;" *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 470–1. Muslim has the expression "O God, make him understand (*faqqihhu*)" and Ibn Abī Shayba has "O God, make him understand the religion and teach him the inner meaning (*al-ta'wīl*);" *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XVI, 331–2; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 386.

¹⁶⁵ Note also Muslim's inclusion of a sub-chapter entitled "the virtue of those who are blood relatives to the Prophet (*al-qarāba*)" that consists of a *ḥadīth* on the authority of 'Ā'isha that the *ahl al-bayt* mentioned in the Qur'an 33:33 are al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, Fāṭima, and 'Alī; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 157–8. This opin-

Another striking observation is the presence of only *one* Anṣārī, Sa'd b. Mu'adh,¹⁶⁶ and one late convert, Jarīr b. 'Abdullāh al-Bajalī¹⁶⁷ among this Muhājirūn-heavy coterie. Three of these twenty *ṣaḥāba* are women, and the hallmark Sunnī belief in the relationship between the relative merits of the first four caliphs and their historical sequence is reinforced in all four of these sources, each of which begins with Abū Bakr and ends with 'Alī. Finally, it is somewhat curious that all of the *shūrā* members appointed by 'Umar are found among these most esteemed *ṣaḥāba* except the tie-breaker 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf.

One of the major effects of the *ṣaḍā'il* chapters in these *ḥadīth* books is the redemption of three of the four *ṣaḥābī* leaders of the failed insurrection against 'Alī at the Battle of the Camel. Ṭalḥa's recovery is the least thorough, as his merits are limited to the mutilation his hands suffered in his defense of the Prophet Muḥammad at Uḥud and do not include any actual prophetic utterances.¹⁶⁸

ions is shared strongly by al-Ṭabarī, who includes an impressive array of reports in his exegesis of this verse on the authority of Umm Salama in particular, and Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī, Anas, 'Ā'isha, Abū Hurayra and others to a lesser degree; *Jāmi' al-bayān*, XXII, 5–7. In fact, al-Ṭabarī musters only one report (on the authority of 'Ikrima) that suggests that this verse refers exclusively to the wives of the Prophet and he puts it at the end of his discussion. Ibn Kathīr actually *begins* his commentary on Sūra 33:33 with this lone 'Ikrima report prior to relating much of the pro-'Alid Ṭabarī material, because his primary purpose is to argue that the term *ahl al-bayt* includes the Prophet's wives *as well as* 'Alī, Fāṭima, and their two sons; *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm*, III (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'rifa, 1995), 491–4. By the time we reach the popular ninth/fifteenth century *Jalālayn*, we are told that the *ahl al-bayt* in this verse are the wives (*nisā'*) of the Prophet exclusively; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1984), 510.

¹⁶⁶ Sa'd b. Mu'adh was injured in the battle against Banū Qurayza and is considered traditionally the judge who delivered the harsh verdict against this Jewish clan just prior to dying from his wounds. Both al-Bukhārī and Muslim include Jābir b. 'Abdullāh's report that the divine Throne rocked (*ihṭazza*) when Sa'd was buried and al-Barā's *ḥadīth* that the Prophet declared that the handkerchiefs Sa'd received in paradise were softer than the silk that several *ṣaḥāba* found particularly pleasing; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 499–500; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XVI, 3–4. Al-Bukhārī also mentions a *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Sa'id al-Khudrī in which the Prophet praises Sa'd's verdict against Banū Qurayza; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 500.

¹⁶⁷ Jarīr's triumphant destruction of the pagan pilgrimage site called Dhū Khalaṣa is celebrated in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, as is his boast that the Prophet never denied him an audience (*mā ḥajabanī*) after his embrace of Islam; *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 521–2; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XVI, 29–31; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 400.

¹⁶⁸ *Faḥ al-bārī*, VII, 448; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 152; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 379. The transmitters of these reports are the Basran Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī (d. 95/714–5) and Kufan Qays b. Abī Ḥāzim al-Bajalī (d. about 90/709).

Al-Zubayr fares substantially better than Ṭalḥa, as he receives the sobriquet *hawārī*¹⁶⁹ from Muḥammad, played a heroic role in battle versus Banū Qurayza, and was considered as one of 'Ā'isha's two "fathers" in another report.¹⁷⁰ 'Ā'isha's merits include the angel Gabriel's salutations, a declaration of her superiority over all other women "like *tharīd*"¹⁷¹ is superior to all other foods," the reception of gifts from *ṣaḥāba* courting favor from the Prophet, and the honor of having her husband pass away in her room.¹⁷² She is also identified as the Prophet's sole wife in paradise,¹⁷³ although only a third of her boasts proclaimed in a report in the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba are confirmed in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim.¹⁷⁴ The message from these sources is unambiguous: the disastrous insurrection led by Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and 'Ā'isha did not denigrate their elevated

¹⁶⁹ The meaning of *hawārī* is not particularly clear in this context. Al-Bukhārī opens the sub-chapter with Ibn 'Abbās's explanation that al-Zubayr was called *hawārī* because he wore white clothes and Ibn Hajar lists several possible interpretations, including helper (*waṣīr*, *nāṣir*), friend (*khalīl*), and pure or sincere (*khālīṣ*); *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 445. Al-Qāḍī 'Iyāḍ prefers the meaning "helper" (*nāṣir*) although he indicates that it could mean "special" (*khāṣṣa*); *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 152. This term is used exclusively in the plural and in reference to the disciples of Jesus in the Qur'ān; see 3:52, 5:111–112, 61:14.

¹⁷⁰ *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 444–5; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 152–4; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 379.

¹⁷¹ Ibn Hajar identifies *tharīd* from a verse of poetry as a dish in which bread is enriched with meat; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 480. Hans Wehr defines it as "a dish of sopped bread, meat, and broth;" *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, third edition (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1980), 102.

¹⁷² *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 478–9; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 164–72; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 391–3.

¹⁷³ This is articulated not by the Prophet but rather by 'Ammār and al-Ḥasan during their speeches to rally the Kufans to fight with 'Alī against 'Ā'isha: I know that ['Ā'isha] is the Prophet's wife in this world and the Hereafter, but God is testing you to follow Him (or: 'Alī) or her; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 478; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 393. Muslim includes a report on the authority of 'Ā'isha herself in which the Prophet learns the identity of his wife in paradise through a dream; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 164.

¹⁷⁴ These nine qualities which only Mary, mother of Jesus, enjoyed besides her are the following: 1) An angel came in my shape; 2) I was seven years old when I married the Prophet; 3) I was nine when I entered his house; 4) I was a virgin; 5) divine revelation came to him while he was in my room; 6) I was among his favorite (*aḥabb*) people; 7) verses were revealed (because of me?) that, had they not been revealed, the Community would have perished; 8) I saw Gabriel, and nobody else did; 9) the Prophet died in my house; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 392. 'Ā'isha's vision of Gabriel is contradicted by the *ḥadīth* in both *Ṣaḥīḥs* in which he offers his greetings to her and she says to the Prophet "you see that which I do not see"; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 478; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 171–2.

status as *ṣaḥāba* who served the Prophet with distinction during his lifetime.

One final dimension of these *ḥadīth* books that warrants examination is whether they successfully answer the challenge raised by Abū Ja'far al-Iskāfī and his son to find a greater *ṣaḥābī* than 'Alī. An obvious candidate for this distinction is Abū Bakr, whom I already mentioned enjoys the first *ṣaḥābī* sub-chapter in all four of the surveyed sources. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim include a noticeably greater number of *ḥadīth* in support of Abū Bakr's merits than those in praise of 'Alī, but the opposite situation is found in Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf* and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Kitāb faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*.¹⁷⁵ A closer analysis of the material reveals a far closer competition between these two men than the number of reports suggests at first glance.

Abū Bakr's primary merits are enumerated in five *ḥadīth*. The first one is transmitted by no fewer than five *ṣaḥāba* and states that he would have been the Prophet's intimate friend (*khalīl*) had the Prophet taken one, but is instead his "companion and brother in Islam."¹⁷⁶ The second *ḥadīth* is 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ's direct question to the Prophet "who is most dear (*aḥabbu*) to you?" to which he replied "'Ā'isha," and when pressed to name a man, said "her father."¹⁷⁷ Two more *ḥadīth* on the authority of Abū Hurayra testify to Abū Bakr's (and 'Umar's) unfaltering belief in anything the Prophet saw, even if it involved a talking cow or wolf, as well as the Prophet's declaration that Abū Bakr will be in paradise because he is the only person to

¹⁷⁵ Al-Bukhārī has 17 reports for Abū Bakr and only six for 'Alī; Muslim has eight for Abū Bakr, and four for 'Alī; Ibn Abī Shayba has 26 *ḥadīth* and sixteen *āthār* for Abū Bakr, and 35 *ḥadīth* and 36 *āthār* for 'Alī; In the *Kitāb faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* we find 275 reports in praise of Abū Bakr and about 370 for 'Alī, although only 164 of them are on the authority of 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. The sole transmitter of this book, Abū Bakr b. Mālik al-Qaṣṣī, collected the remaining reports from his other teachers.

¹⁷⁶ This *ḥadīth* is transmitted by Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn al-Zubayr, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, and Ibn Mas'ūd; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 365–6; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 122–3; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 351. Ibn 'Abbās's version found in al-Bukhārī reads: *law kuntu muttakhidhan khalīlan la-ittakhadhtu Abū Bakr wa lākin akhī wa ṣāḥibī*. Abū Sa'īd's version, included by Muslim and Ibn Abī Shayba, has the preface that "the most beneficial person to me with respect to wealth and companionship is Abū Bakr;" *amannu l-nāsi 'alayya fī mālihi wa ṣuḥbatihī Abū Bakr*.

¹⁷⁷ *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 367; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 125; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 254–5. Recall that 'Amr is one of the three *ṣaḥāba* accused by the Baghdādī Mu'tazila of forging anti-'Alid *ḥadīth* that I mentioned above in the previous section.

combine the qualities of fasting, following funeral processions, feeding the poor, and visiting the infirm.¹⁷⁸ Finally, the Prophet's locution to an unnamed woman that "if you do not find me, go to Abū Bakr" is a not particularly subtle indicant that Abū Bakr was the most deserving of the leadership of the Muslim Community after its founder's death.¹⁷⁹

Al-Bukhārī culls several additional *ḥadīth* and *āthār* not mentioned by Muslim in support of Abū Bakr's greatness. The Ibn 'Umar report that was denigrated by Ibn al-Iskāfī, namely that "we would favor Abū Bakr, then 'Umar, then 'Uthmān at the time of the Prophet," opens the sub-chapter of Abū Bakr's merits in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹⁸⁰ 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb declares Abū Bakr to be "the best of us" (*khayrunā*) in 'Ā'isha's transmission of the events of the Saqīfa, as does 'Alī himself, at least according to his son Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya.¹⁸¹ Two blatantly anti-'Alī reports that indicate the superiority of the first three caliphs to his exclusion are also found in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.¹⁸² Finally, al-Bukhārī drives home the point of Abū Bakr (and

¹⁷⁸ *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 367–8; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 127–8; *al-Kūṭab al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 255–6. Ibn Abī Shayba does not include the story about the miraculous talking cow or wolf.

¹⁷⁹ *in lam tajidnī fa-'ā Abū Bakr*; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 366; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 126. |

¹⁸⁰ *kunnā nuḥayyirū bayna l-nāsi fī zamāni l-nabī ﷺ fa-nuḥayyirū Abū Bakr thumma 'Umar thumma 'Uthmān b. 'Affān*; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 364.

¹⁸¹ *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 368–9. The Ibn al-Ḥanafīyya report is as follows: I said to my father ['Alī]: "which person is best (*khayr*) after the Prophet?" He said: "Abū Bakr." I said "who next?" to which he replied "Umar." I was afraid that he would say "'Uthmān," so I said "Are you the next best?" to which he replied "I am but a man among the Muslims." Ibn Hajar remarks that the *isnād* is entirely Kufān, and the master critic Sufyān al-Thawrī is found in it. This report is found also in *al-Kūṭab al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 353.

¹⁸² The first of these is a report on the authority of Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī in which Abū Bakr seeks to meet with the Prophet and is promised paradise for no particular reason along with the acceptance of his request (*idhan lahu wa bashshirhu bi-l-janna*); this identical routine occurs for both 'Umar and then 'Uthmān, the last of whom is promised paradise for "a trial that will befall him" (*alā balwā tuṣībuhu*). The second *ḥadīth* follows immediately and consists of a random occasion in which Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān were on Mount Uhud with the Prophet when it trembled (*rajafa*); the Prophet said "Be firm, Mount Uhud, for there is a Prophet, a trustworthy one (*siddiq*) and two martyrs (*shahid*) on it!" (*Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 370–1). How Anas b. Mālik could have heard this report is left to the reader's imagination. Note a similar report to this one on the authority of Abū Hurayra in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim: the mountain is Ḥirā' instead of Uhud, and the *ṣaḥāba* ascending it are not just the first three caliphs, but also 'Alī, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and, in a variant recension, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 153.

'Umar's) superiority by the inclusion of a report in which 'Alī recalls how the Prophet used to say habitually "Abū Bakr, 'Umar and I did this, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and I did this, and Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and I did this" and prays that God will put 'Umar in the company of his "two companions" (*ṣaḥibayh*), Muḥammad and Abū Bakr.¹⁸³

Muslim and Ibn Abī Shayba include a few additional reports that affirm Abū Bakr's superiority without identifying any particular virtues he may have possessed. The story of Abū Bakr and the Prophet in the cave during their perilous emigration to Yathrib is quoted briefly in both of these books.¹⁸⁴ Muslim includes 'Ā'isha's opinion that the Prophet Muḥammad would have appointed Abū Bakr, 'Umar, or Abū 'Ubayda as his successors had he done so, and that the Prophet called for Abū Bakr, 'Ā'isha, and her brother in order to write some sort of succession document to prevent future generations of Muslims from quarrelling over the identity of the greatest *ṣaḥābī*.¹⁸⁵ Ibn Abī Shayba includes an extraordinary report told by Abū Bakra al-Thaqafī to Mu'āwiya of the Prophet's dream in which he outweighed Abū Bakr on a scale, Abū Bakr outweighed 'Umar, 'Umar outweighed 'Uthmān, and the message was "[Such is the] caliphate and prophecy, and then God gave dominion (*al-mulk*) to whomever He wills."¹⁸⁶ Another *ḥadīth* unique to Ibn Abī Shayba on the authority of Jābir b. 'Abdullāh is the following: the Prophet stated that "a man of paradise will enter (this room)" prior to the entrance of both Abū Bakr and then 'Umar; the third time he said this, he added "Oh God, if you wish, make it 'Alī" after which 'Alī miraculously entered. This *ḥadīth* appears to be a counterweight to the previously mentioned pro-Umayyad report and may have been forged by an adherent of the *tashayyū'* position, since 'Alī follows Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and 'Uthmān is not even in the room, literally or figuratively. While

Muslim's version is found in the sub-chapter of Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr's virtues, and not in the one devoted to Abū Bakr.

¹⁸³ *in kuntu la-arjū an ya'jalaka llāhu ma'a ṣaḥibayka, li-annī kathīran mā kuntu asma'u rasūli llāhi ﷺ yaqūlu: kuntu wa Abū Bakr wa 'Umar, wa fa'altu wa Abū Bakr wa 'Umar, wa-intalaqtu wa Abū Bakr wa 'Umar, wa in kuntu la-arjū an ya'jalaka llāhu ma'ahumā*; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 371. The setting of this *ḥadīth* is at 'Umar's funeral and the reporter of 'Alī's comments is Ibn 'Abbās.

¹⁸⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 122; *al-Kūṭab al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 351.

¹⁸⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 125–6.

¹⁸⁶ *khilāfatun wa nubuwatun thumma yu'ā llāhu l-mulka man yashā'u*; *al-Kūṭab al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 355.

these sub-chapters contain many positive references to Abū Bakr, most of which are recorded as prophetic utterances, little evidence is provided for the Sunnī position of the superiority of Abū Bakr over his fellow contemporaries in general, and 'Alī in particular.

Three *ḥadīth* dominate the sub-chapters of 'Alī's merits in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* and Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf*. The first is the Prophet's statement that "you ('Alī) are in relation to me as Aaron was to Moses," a *ḥadīth* that Muslim heard from no fewer than nine of his teachers.¹⁸⁷ A particularly striking variant of this report preserved by Muslim sets this *ḥadīth* in the context of Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ's excuse for refusing to curse 'Alī in response to Mu'āwīya's question "what prevents you from cursing Abū Turāb?"¹⁸⁸ 'Alī's military prowess is recounted in the second *ḥadīth*, in which he was given the leadership position (*rāya*) that led to the victory at Khaybar in 7/629.¹⁸⁹ The Prophet's statement that 'Alī is one "who loves God and His messenger and whom God and His messenger love too" is found in most versions of this *ḥadīth*.¹⁹⁰ The final report found in all three sources is a positive spin put on 'Alī's nickname Abū Turāb (father of dirt) that was employed as a term of abuse during the Umayyad period.¹⁹¹

While al-Bukhārī's remaining reports of 'Alī's merits are lackluster,

¹⁸⁷ *anta minnī bi-manzilatin Hārūn min Mūsā; Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 434; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 141–3; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 369. Muslim's nine sources, many of whom we have encountered in previous chapters, are Yahyā b. Yahyā al-Tamīmī, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. al-Ṣabbāḥ, 'Ubayd Allāh al-Qawāriri, Surayj b. Yūnus, Ibn Abī Shayba, Muḥammad b. al-Muthannā, 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mu'adh, Qutayba b. Sa'd, and Muḥammad b. 'Abbād.

¹⁸⁸ *mā mana'aka an tasubba Abā Turāb? Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 143. The other two excuses that Sa'd puts forth in this *ḥadīth* are 'Alī's military prowess at Khaybar (the second major *ḥadīth* of the virtues of 'Alī) and exegesis of the "sons of the Prophet" in Sūra 3:61 as 'Alī, Fāṭima, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn.

¹⁸⁹ *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 432–3; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 143–5; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 372–3.

¹⁹⁰ *yuhibbu llāha wa rasūluhu wa yuhibbuhu llāhu wa rasūluhu*; the second half of this sentence is suppressed or cast in doubt in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, but found in the books of Muslim and Ibn Abī Shayba; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 432–3; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 143–5; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 372–3.

¹⁹¹ The gist of the story in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* is that the Prophet found 'Alī asleep in the mosque instead of with Fāṭima and that he wiped dirt (*turāb*) off of 'Alī's back from where his covering had slipped; *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 433; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 147. Note that al-Bukhārī suppressed the context of this *ḥadīth*, whereas Muslim identified it as a reaction of the *ṣaḥābī* transmitter, Sahl b. Sa'd, to the vilification (*yashumm*) of Abū Turāb (Alī) by an unidentified Marwānid governor of Medina.

Muslim includes a *ḥadīth* that is remarkably pro-Shī'ī. It is a variant transmission of the events of Ghadīr Khumm,¹⁹² in which the Prophet declared that he left for his community two "weighty guides (*thaqalayn*): the Book of God . . . and my family (*ahl bayt*)—I remind you, oh God, of my family!"¹⁹³ The transmitter of this *ḥadīth*, Zayd b. Arqam, even clarifies the meaning of the contentious term *ahl al-bayt* and defines it as not just the Prophet's wives, but all those who were prohibited from taking from the alms (*ṣadaqa*), namely the families of 'Alī, his brothers 'Aqīl and Ja'far, and the family of al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.¹⁹⁴ Muslim's inclusion of this *ḥadīth*, combined with his pro-'Alīd exegesis of Sūra 33:33¹⁹⁵ not only sets him apart from al-Bukhārī's uninspired presentation of 'Alī and his family,¹⁹⁶ but even supports Madelung's previously cited assertion of the elevated status of the Prophet's household during his lifetime.

The *ṣaḥā'il* sub-chapters found in the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba, and *Kitāb ṣaḥā'il al-ṣaḥāba* attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal accomplish three major tasks with regard to the classical Sunnī position on the *ṣaḥāba*. The first effect is the subtle suggestion that the succession of the first four caliphs mirrored their respective excellence, as all four books are structured so that the first four *ṣaḥāba* mentioned are the first four caliphs in their historical sequence. Secondly, this study uncovered that all but two of the twenty most-favored *ṣaḥāba* were Qurayshī Muhājirūn or wives of the Prophet. Thirdly, these sub-chapters affirm the greatness of Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and 'Ā'isha despite their military foray against

¹⁹² The most famous prophetic statement uttered at Ghadīr Khumm, *man kuntu mawlāhu fa-'Alī mawlāhu*, is not found in either of the two *Ṣaḥīḥ* books but appears no fewer than seven times in the sub-chapter of the merits of 'Alī in Ibn Abī Shayba's *Muṣannaf*; see *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VI, 368 (Burayda), 369 (Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ), 371 (Zayd b. Yuthay', Abū Hurayra), 375 (al-Barā' b. 'Āzib), 376–7 (Burayda).

¹⁹³ *wa anā tārīkun fikum thaqalayn: awwaluhumā kitābu llāhi fīhi l-hudā wa l-nūr fa-khudhū bi-kitābi llāhi wa istamsikū bih . . . wa ahlū baytī wdhakkirukum Allāha fī ahlī baytī* (said three times); this is the first of four versions cited by Muslim, all of which are on the authority of the Kufan *tābi'ī* Yazīd b. Ḥayyān who heard it from Zayd b. Arqam; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 145–7.

¹⁹⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, XV, 146.

¹⁹⁵ See above, note 165.

¹⁹⁶ Al-Bukhārī's most damaging transmission in his sub-chapter of 'Alī's merits is his closing citation that the prominent Basran *tābi'ī* Muḥammad b. Sīrīn believed that "the majority of the transmissions about (or on the authority of) 'Alī are lies;" *wa kāna Ibnu Sīrīn yarā anna 'ammata mā yurwā 'an 'Alī al-kadhibu*, *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, VII, 434.

‘Alī, and some of them even endeavor to redeem ‘Alī’s *ṣaḥābī* opponents at Šifīn, Mu‘āwiya and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ. Perhaps the most striking finding is that these reports provide lackluster evidence of the superiority of Abū Bakr over ‘Alī, and the fact that six of the twenty most-favored *ṣaḥāba* are blood relatives of the Prophet could potentially support the claims of the Zaydiyya/Baghdādī Mu‘tazila and Madelung that ‘Alī was both a feasible successor to the Prophet and enjoyed a uniquely privileged relationship (like that between Aaron to Moses) with him. While these selections from a few third/ninth century *ḥadīth* books clearly refute the extreme Rāfidī opinion that all but a handful of *ṣaḥāba* apostasized immediately after the death of the Prophet, they do seem a long cry from the classical Sunnī ideal of the collective probity of the Companions, and, instead, promote a moderate position that certain of these men and women distinguished themselves from the masses by their loyalty to the Prophet and by his explicit praise of their actions and character.

VI.4.2 Ibn Sa‘d and the art of prosopography

Ibn Sa‘d’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* contains entries of variable length for 1371 male and 629 female *ṣaḥāba*. This vast array of material not only rectifies the oversight of the role of the Anṣār and later converts found in the *faḍā’il* chapters of the four *ḥadīth* compilations just surveyed, but also emphasizes the collective role of the *ṣaḥāba* in the formative period of Islam. Ibn Sa‘d pays respect to the 140 men killed in the major battles led by the Prophet Muḥammad as well as the twelve casualties at the raid on Mu‘ta, and the fifty-five *ṣaḥāba* deaths at the battle of Yamāma at ‘Aqrabā’ during the brief caliphate of Abū Bakr.¹⁹⁷ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is far more than a memorial to the *ṣaḥāba* who gave their lives to the establishment of Islam and instead provides basic information as to the identities of the major figures who were the earliest Muslims, those who excelled on the battlefield, and those who were gifted with superior knowledge, three qualities which were and continue to be held in considerable esteem in the eyes of Muslims. The next several paragraphs show how Ibn

¹⁹⁷ Fourteen *ṣaḥāba* were killed at Badr, seventy-nine at Uhud, five at Khandaq, thirteen at Khaybar, and twenty-two at either al-Hunayn or al-Tā’if according to Ibn Sa‘d. Note that he reports that eight were killed at Ajnadayn and nine at the Battle of the Bridge during the reign of ‘Umar.

Sa‘d transcends the question of the identity of the “best” *ṣaḥābī* (or *ṣaḥāba*) that concerned many of his contemporaries and, instead, provides valuable information as to how the venture of Islam succeeded in establishing a firm base in the Ḥijāz during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Ibn Sa‘d quotes a definition of the term *ṣaḥābī* that was championed by his teacher Muḥammad b. ‘Umar al-Wāqidi and is remarkably similar to the one put forth by Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī a century later. Al-Wāqidi states:

Whoever saw the Messenger of God ﷺ and saw his forbearance (*ḥilm*) and submitted and understood (*‘aqala*) the religion and its goodness (*raḍiyahu*) is a companion of the Prophet, in our opinion, even if it was for just an hour of the day. His companions are of different stations and classes, and [differ according] to precedence in their conversion. Every man is described by what he saw of the conduct of the Prophet and what he heard from him; this is what determines his degree of greatness as a companion.¹⁹⁸

All of the companions (*aṣḥāb*) of the Messenger of God ﷺ were Imāms who should be emulated and whose actions have been preserved. They were asked to issue legal rulings and did so, they heard *ḥadīth*, and they conveyed them.¹⁹⁹

Al-Wāqidi even divides the *ṣaḥāba* who outlived the Prophet into three categories according to their roles in *ḥadīth* transmission: 1) those whose *ḥadīth* were preserved; 2) those who gave *fatwas*; 3) those who did not transmit any *ḥadīth*, even though they may have enjoyed a close acquaintance with the Prophet out of fear of inaccurate transmission, or due either to their being ignored (by the *tābi‘ūn*) or due

¹⁹⁸ *kullu man ra’a rasūla llāhi ﷺ wa qad adraka l-ḥilma fa-aslama wa ‘aqala amra l-dīni wa raḍiyahu fa-huwa ‘indanā mimman ṣaḥiba l-nabī ﷺ wa law sā’a min al-l-nahāri wa lākinna aṣḥābahu ‘alā manāzilihim wa ṭabaqātihim wa taqaddumihim fī l-islāmi fa-yūṣafu kullu rajulin minhum bi-mā adraka min amri l-nabī ﷺ wa bi-mā samī’a minhu fa-yarjū dhālika ilā ṣuḥbatihī ‘alā qadri manāzilihim min dhālika; al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā, VIII, 604–5. The context of this remark is the entry of Jarīr b. ‘Abdullāh al-Bajalī, who entered Islam during the last five months of the Prophet’s life. Al-Wāqidi refutes the opinion attributed to Sa‘id b. al-Musayyab by his grandson that a *ṣaḥābī* had to spend at least a year or two or fought in a battle or two with the Prophet in order to earn his status by citing the example of Jarīr and by this definition of a *ṣaḥābī*.*

¹⁹⁹ *wa kullu aṣḥābi rasūli llāhi ﷺ kānū a’immatan yuṭtadā bi-him wa yuḥfaẓu ‘alayhim mā kānū yaf’alūna wa yustaftūna fa-yuṭtūna wa samī’u aḥādīthha fa-addūhā; al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā, II, 439. The context for this citation is al-Wāqidi’s explanation as to why to few *ḥadīth* are transmitted on the authority of senior *ṣaḥāba* and so many from the younger ‘jurist’ *ṣaḥāba*. The simple reason for this discrepancy, he says, is due to the fact that the older *ṣaḥāba* passed away before they were asked many questions.*

^{20R} *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 300 (Dhakwān) and 307–10 (As'ad).

among the "first six Anṣārī converts," and he adds Mu'ādh b. al-Ḥārith and 'Uwaym b. Sā'ada among the "first eight Anṣārī converts." While very little is known about any of these men,²⁰⁹ their acceptance of Islam during a difficult period of the Prophet's mission must have been significant since they redirected his energy to Yathrib and laid the groundwork for the first Muslim polity.

The most important leaders among the oft-neglected Anṣār may have been the twelve *nuqabā'* (leaders) who embraced Islam prior to the Hijra.²¹⁰ These men represented eight clans among the Aws and Khazraj tribes and half of them possessed the valuable skill of literacy in Arabic.²¹¹ Al-Barā' b. Ma'rūr died a month prior to the Hijra, leaving a third of estate to the Prophet, and As'ad b. Zurāra, whom we just mentioned, also died prior to Badr.²¹² Sa'd b. Khaythama was killed at Badr, and Sa'd b. al-Rabī', 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr, and Rāfi' b. Mālik were all slain at Uhud.²¹³ Only four of the twelve *nuqabā'* outlived the Prophet:²¹⁴ Usayd b. al-Ḥudayr (d. 20/641), Abū l-Haytham al-Tayyihān (d. 20/641), Sa'd b. 'Ubāda (d. 15/636), and 'Ubāda b. al-Sāmit (d. 34/654-5). The attention Ibn Sa'd devotes to these twelve founding fathers of Medinan Islam contrasts sharply with al-Bukhārī's inclusion of only Sa'd b. 'Ubāda and Usayd b. al-Ḥudayr among his sub-chapters on the virtues of the *ṣaḥāba* in the

²⁰⁹ 'Awf was killed at Badr by Abū Jahl after having injured him (*al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 257); Jābir fought in all battles with the Prophet and transmitted *ḥadīth* from him (*ibid.*, III, 292); Qutba fought in all of the early battles, despite serious injuries at Uhud, led a raid, and lived until the caliphate of 'Uthmān (*ibid.*, III, 294); 'Uqba b. 'Amir fought in all of the battles and was killed at the battle of Yamāma in 12/633 (*ibid.*, III, 290); Mu'ādh b. al-Ḥārith appears to have avoided most battles after Badr and lived until the time of 'Alī's struggles with Mu'āwiya (*ibid.*, III, 256-7); and 'Uwaym b. Sā'ida was promised paradise by the Prophet, was alluded to in the Qur'ān (Sūra 9:108), and died during the caliphate of 'Umar (*ibid.*, III, 242). All of these men participated in at least one of the two 'Aqaba meetings that paved the way for the Hijra.

²¹⁰ The uncertainty expressed in this statement is in light of Watt's observation that the *nuqabā'* "do not appear to have fulfilled any function;" *Muhammad at Mecca*, 147.

²¹¹ The literate *nuqabā'* were Usayd b. al-Ḥudayr, 'Abdullāh b. Rawāḥa, Sa'd b. 'Ubāda, al-Mundhir b. 'Amr, and Rāfi' b. Mālik.

²¹² *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 313-4 (al-Barā') and 307-10 (As'ad).

²¹³ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 252 (Sa'd b. Khaythama); 270-1 (Sa'd b. Rabī'); 287-8 ('Abdullāh); 314-5 (Rāfi').

²¹⁴ Al-Mundhir b. 'Amr was killed at Bi'r Ma'ūna and 'Abdullāh b. Rawāḥa was killed at Mu'ta (after Usāma b. Zayd and Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib); *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 284-5 and 271-4, respectively.

Ṣaḥīh and emphasizes the collective nature of the first stages of the venture of Islam.²¹⁵

The manner of presentation in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* makes it somewhat challenging to reduce to a meaningful number the *ṣaḥāba* who were most significant on the battlefield. Roughly 160 men are reported to have participated in all of the battles led by the Prophet from the time of Badr or Uhud. The following is a list of thirty-four of these loyal soldiers (in alphabetical order) for whom Ibn Sa'd provides a death date after the year 30 AH and who subsequently witnessed the unraveling of political leadership under 'Uthmān; it contains many of the names mentioned in the previous sections, as well as some new faces.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 1) 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf (d. 32) | 18) Jabr b. 'Atīk (d. 61) |
| 2) 'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd (d. 32) | 19) Ka'b b. Mālik (d. 50) |
| 3) 'Abdullāh b. Zayd b. 'Abd (d. 32) | 20) Khabbāb b. al-Aratt (d. 37) Rabbih |
| 4) 'Abdullāh b. Zayd b. 'Āṣim (d. 63) | 21) Khawwāt b. Jubayr (d. 40) |
| 5) Abū 'Abs b. Jabr b. 'Amr (d. 34) | 22) al-Miqdād b. 'Amr (d. 33) |
| 6) Abū l-Yasār, Ka'b b. 'Amr (d. 55) | 23) Miṣṭaḥ b. Uthātha (d. 34) |
| 7) Abū Qatāda b. Rib'ī (d. 54) | 24) Muḥammad b. Maslama (d. 46) |
| 8) Abū Ṭalḥa, Zayd b. Sahl (d. 34) | 25) Qudāma b. Maẓ'un (d. 36) |
| 9) Abū Usayd al-Sā'idī (d. 34) | 26) Rāfi' b. Khadij (d. 74) |
| 10) 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40) | 27) Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ (d. 55) |
| 11) 'Amir b. 'Aws (d. 63) | 28) Sahl b. Ḥunayf (d. 38) |
| 12) 'Amir b. Rabī'a b. Mālik (d. 35) | 29) Sa'id b. Zayd b. 'Amr (d. 50) |
| 13) 'Ammār b. Yāsir (d. 37) | 30) Ṣuhayb b. Sinān (d. 38) |
| 14) al-Arqam b. Abī l-Arqam (d. 55) | 31) Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allāh (d. 36) |
| 15) 'Āṣim b. 'Adī (d. 45) | 32) al-Ṭufayl b. al-Ḥārith (d. 32) |
| 16) al-Ḥārith b. Khazama (d. 40) | 33) 'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit (d. 34) |
| 17) Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān (d. 36) | 34) al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām (d. 36) |

Ibn Sa'd also identifies *ṣaḥābī* leaders of fifty-five raids (*sarāya*) commissioned by the Prophet but which he himself did not join. Six of

²¹⁵ This is not to suggest that al-Bukhārī engaged in a conspiracy to conceal the Anṣār from history, since, after all, he devotes a special chapter to them in his *Ṣaḥīh*. It is, by contrast, an observation that whatever positive merits of individual Anṣār that the Prophet may have uttered were not preserved in *ḥadīth* with sound *isnāds* and thus their stature in the most prestigious Sunnī *ḥadīth* book was reduced.

The evidence in support of the special status of these *ṣaḥāba* ranges immensely. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Amr, Abū Bakr, Abū Dharr, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Ibn ‘Umar, ‘Imrān b. al-Ḥuṣayn, Salmān al-Fārisī, Shaddād b. ‘Aws, and ‘Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit each receive three or fewer reports in support of their exceptional religious knowledge. Abū Mūsā, ‘Alī, Ibn ‘Abbās, Ibn Mas‘ūd, Mu‘ādh b. Jabal, and Ubayy are praised for their superior knowledge of the Qur‘ān, some of whom praise each other’s Qur‘ānic knowledge.²²⁶ ‘Ā’isha is the only *ṣaḥābī* identified as an expert of *sunan*, and Abū Hurayra’s self-defense against the charge of spreading too many *ḥadīth* (*ikthār al-ḥadīth*) is articulated both here as well as in his biography among the *ṣaḥāba* of the third *ṭabaqa*.²²⁷ The masters of legal opinions (*fatwā*, *fiqh*, or *qaḍā’*) include ‘Ā’isha, ‘Alī, Ibn ‘Abbās, and Zayd b. Thābit. Sulaymān b. Yasār is quoted as saying that ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān elevated Zayd’s opinions above those of everyone else, and al-Zuhrī mentions that Zayd’s legal authority continued in Medina until his death in 45/665.²²⁸ Ibn Sa‘d also provides some tantalizing references to the religious advisors (*shūrā*) of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar which include Ibn Mas‘ūd, Abū l-Dardā, and Abū Dharr according to Shu‘ba and ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, Mu‘ādh, Ubayy, and Zayd b. Thābit according to al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad.²²⁹ Finally, only ‘Alī, ‘Umar, and Zayd b. Thābit are included in all

²²⁶ For example, Abū Mūsā praises Ibn Mas‘ūd’s recitation, and Ibn Mas‘ūd praises Mu‘ādh as an “obedient *umma*” like the prophet Ibrāhīm, as well as Ibn ‘Abbās; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, II, 423, 425–6, 434. Note also that ‘Umar and Anas praise Ubayy as the most learned in Qur‘ān recitation; *ibid.*, II, 422.

²²⁷ This apology rests upon both two Qur‘ānic verses (Sūra 2:159–60) and a prophetic *ḥadīth* in which Abū Hurayra’s memory was miraculously safeguarded by his cloak. Ibn Sa‘d also includes a report with Ibn ‘Umar’s praise of Abū Hurayra: “you are the most knowledgable among us of the Messenger of God and have memorized the most *ḥadīth*”; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, II, 432–3 and IV, 479–88.

²²⁸ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, II, 431. Zayd’s greatest triumph was ‘Uthmān’s adoption of his reading of the Qur‘ān as the official text; this act seriously offended Ibn Mas‘ūd, who wryly complained that Zayd was a “mere youth with two locks of hair playing with boys” (*wa Zayd ibn Thābit ghlāmun lahu dhū‘ābatāni ya‘abu ma’a l-ghilmān*) at the time he was hearing the Qur‘ān directly from the Prophet’s mouth; *ibid.*, II, 422.

²²⁹ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, II, 419 (Shu‘ba’s report) and 426 (al-Qāsim). Note also the report in ‘Umar’s lengthy entry that he refused to employ *ṣaḥāba* such as ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf in the territories due to his “revulsion against tainting them with work” (*akrahu an udannisahum bi-l-‘amal*) and instead designated others such as Abū Hurayra, Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqās, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, Mu‘āwiya, and al-Mughīra b. Shu‘ba in these regions; *ibid.*, III, 150.

five reports that identify the *ṣaḥābī* bastions of knowledge in a special sub-section of this chapter.²³⁰

Does Ibn Sa‘d’s catholic presentation of the *ṣaḥāba* provide any rivals to the proponents of the superiority of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb? Despite his modest-length biography, ‘Alī’s precedence and status with regard to the Prophet “like Aaron to Moses” is affirmed by Ibn Sa‘d.²³¹ Although he shares pride of place with Zayd b. Thābit with regard to legal knowledge, the latter can hardly be considered a competitor in the realms of combat and precedence. Ibn Mas‘ūd, on the other hand, was one of the earliest converts, participated in all of the Prophet’s battles, and may even have had superior knowledge of the Qur‘ān than ‘Alī. Mu‘ādh b. Jabal and Ubayy b. Ka‘b were both early Anṣārī converts who shared equally distinguished military careers and exceptional knowledge of the Qur‘ān. ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, whose entry in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā* is by far the longest among the *ṣaḥāba*, may be the strongest competitor to ‘Alī, despite his post-Arḥam conversion; Ibn Sa‘d notes not only his military support and legal knowledge, but includes a list of twelve major precedents (*aw‘āl*) that he inaugurated during his caliphate, many of which irrevocably shaped the course of Islamic civilization.²³² While Ibn Sa‘d avoids the polemical dispute as to the identification of the “greatest *ṣaḥābī*” in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, he does provide a mine of useful information that can be employed to distinguish the gifted and influential *ṣaḥāba* from the hundreds of Muslim soldiers who simply disappeared from history the moment the fighting ceased.

²³⁰ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, II, 426. The five sources are Sahl b. Abī Khaythama, al-Miswar b. Makhrama, Masrūq (two reports), and al-Sha‘bī. Ubayy is mentioned in four of the reports, Mu‘ādh and Ibn Mas‘ūd in three, ‘Uthmān and Abū Mūsā in two, and Abū l-Dardā in one.

²³¹ *Al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 13–5. Ibn Sa‘d includes this *ḥadīth* in ‘Alī’s entry.

²³² These precedents are: 1) adoption of the title “commander of the Believers” (*amīr al-mu‘minīn*); 2) inauguration of the Hijrī calendar in Rabī‘a I, 16 AH; 3) compilation of the Qur‘ān on leaves of parchment (*ṣuḥuf*); 4) designation of night-time vigils (probably *tarāwīḥ* prayers) during Ramaḍān as a practice (*sunna*); 5) severe punishments for alcohol consumption (80 lashes); 6) foundation of a night patrol in Medina; 7) conquests (*futūḥ*) of Syria, Iraq, and Egypt; 8) Extraction of land tax (*kharāj*) and poll tax (*jizya*); 9) construction of garrison towns (*amṣār*); 10) appointment of judges (*qāḍī*); 11) pension-register (*diwān*) arranged by tribe and precedence in Islam; 12) transportation of food by ship from Egypt to Medina; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, III, 150.

VI.4.3 *Ibn Ḥanbal and the ṣaḥāba as ḥadīth-transmitters*

Ibn Ḥanbal's mighty *Musnad* towers over the nine works of identical structure that were composed by his contemporaries, most of which are now lost.²³³ The format in which it has survived is due to his son 'Abdullāh's labors, and reflects a Sunnī perspective not unlike the one found in the recent discussion of the *faḍā'il* chapters in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* and *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba. The first four sections of the *Musnad* consist of the *ḥadīth* transmitted by the first four caliphs in their chronological sequence, followed by the remaining six *ṣaḥāba* promised paradise in Sa'īd b. Zayd's report.²³⁴ A very brief division of four additional *ṣaḥāba* come next and is followed immediately by the *ahl al-bayt* and Banū Hāshim.²³⁵ The placement of these latter two groups of *ṣaḥāba* prior to the seven "prolific ones" (*mukthirūn*)²³⁶ suggests 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad's reverence for the blood relatives of the Prophet Muḥammad similar to the respect we witnessed in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The remaining sections are arranged geographically (Meccans, Medinans, Syrians, Kufans, and Basrans) and conclude with the Anṣār and other tribes (*qabā'il*). All in all, some seven hundred *ṣaḥāba* are found in the *Musnad* as *ḥadīth*-transmitters of strikingly different degrees of quantity.

The onerous task of counting *ḥadīth* has been facilitated by Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, who, as was mentioned earlier, grouped all reports that shared a common *ṣaḥābī* and *tābiʿī* under one heading called a *ṭaraf* (plural *aṭrāf*) in his book *Aṭrāf musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. We can, thanks to Ibn Ḥajar, rather easily identify six classes of *ṣaḥāba* who transmitted twenty or more *aṭrāf* in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal. The first category consists solely of Abū Hurayra, whose

2278 *aṭrāf* are more than double the quantity of material transmitted by the next most prolific *ṣaḥābī*. The second group, which I have labeled 'primary transmitters', includes 'Ā'isha, Ibn 'Umar, Anas, Ibn 'Abbās, and Jābir b. 'Abdullāh. The next group, 'secondary transmitters', has four members—Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Alī, and 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr, while the 'tertiary transmitters' consist of 'Umar, Umm Salama, Abū Dharr, Abū Mūsā, and Abū Umāma al-Bāhilī.²³⁷ Eighteen *ṣaḥāba* transmitted between fifty and a hundred *aṭrāf* in the *Musnad*, and another twenty-four transmitted between twenty and fifty. The following tables provides a basic overview of this data; the number of *aṭrāf* Ibn Ḥajar attributes to each of these *ṣaḥāba* in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* is included as a tool to identify these two scholars' respective preferences of certain men and women over others.²³⁸

Table 6.1: Abū Hurayra, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary *ṣaḥāba*

Name	Date	Tab ^a	City/Region	Ibn Ḥanbal	Bukhārī
Abū Hurayra	58	III	Medina	2278	446
'Ā'isha <i>bint</i> Abī Bakr	58	Wives	Medina	1079	242
'Abdullāh b. 'Umar	74	II	Medina	1065	270
Anas b. Mālik	92	III	Basra	934	286
'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās	67	V	Mecca, Ṭā'if	808	217
Jābir b. 'Abdullāh	78	II	Medina	603	90
Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī	64	III	Medina	481	62
'Abdullāh b. Mas'ūd	32	I	Kufa	369	85
'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib	40	I	Medina, Kufa	333	29
'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ	65	III	Medina, Egypt	320	26
'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb	23	I	Medina	167	60
Umm Salama	59	Wives	Medina	138	16

²³³ These books were identified above, V.2.6, note 101.

²³⁴ They are in the following order in the *Musnad*: Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqās, Sa'īd b. Zayd, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Awf, Abū 'Ubayda b. al-Jarrāḥ.

²³⁵ The prominent placement of the small collections of *ḥadīth* transmitted by 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Bakr, Zayd b. Khārija, al-Hārith b. Khazma and Sa'd *mawla* Abī Bakr is puzzling; the men of the *ahl al-bayt* include al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, 'Aqīl b. 'Alī, Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, and 'Abdullāh b. Ja'far; those of Banū Hāshim are al-'Abbās and his sons al-Faḍl, Tammām, 'Ubayd Allāh, and the prolific 'Abdullāh.

²³⁶ Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, Abū Hurayra, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Anas b. Mālik, and Jābir b. 'Abdullāh. The inclusion of Abū Rimthā's brief *musnad* and exclusion of 'Ā'isha's enormous collection in this section is also peculiar.

²³⁷ His name is Ṣudayy b. 'Ajlān and he embraced Islam after the conquest of Mecca. Abū Umāma settled in Syria and lived until 86/705. Note that Ibn Sa'd states that Abū Umāma was only 61 years old when he died, which would make him too young to be a *ṣaḥābī*; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, VII, 196. Al-Dhahabī includes a report that Abū Umāma was thirty at the time of the Farewell Pilgrimage, which would make him over a hundred years old when he died; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 359–63.

²³⁸ Ibn Ḥajar provides this information regarding the *aṭrāf* of the *ṣaḥāba* in *Ṣaḥīḥ* his introduction to *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, *Hady al-sārī*, 659–61.

Table 6.1 (*cont.*)

Name	Date	Tab ^a	City/Region	Ibn Ḥanbal	Bukhārī
Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī	31	II	Syria, Rabadha	137	14
Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī	52	II	Iraq	118	57
Abū Umāma al-Bāhilī	86	IV	Syria	107	3

^a Tab refers to the *ṭabaqa* of the *ṣaḥābī* in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

Table 6.2: Minor *ṣaḥāba*: 50–100 *aṭrāf*

Name	Date	Tab	City/region	Ibn Ḥanbal	Bukhārī
'Uqba b. 'Āmir al-Juḥanī	58	III	Egypt	97	9
al-Barā' b. 'Āzib	72	III	Kufa	94	38
Mu'adh b. Jabal	18	I	Syria	91	6
Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān	36	II	Iraq	85	22
'Imrān b. al-Ḥuṣayn	52	III	Basra	82	22
Ubayy b. Ka'b	30	I	Medina	77	7
'Uthmān b. 'Affān	36	I	Medina	73	9
Burayda b. al-Ḥuṣayn	63	II	Basra, Marw	73	3
Abū l-Dardā'	18	II	Syria	71	4
'Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit	34	I	Syria, Ramla	65	9
Samura b. Jundab	58	II	Basra	61	3
Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān	60	IV	Syria	60	8
Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī	52	I	Medina, Syria	56	0
Jābir b. Samura al-Suwā'ī	74	IV	Kufa	54	2
al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba	50	III	Iraq	51	11
Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ	55	I	Iraq	51	20
Abū Bakra al-Thaqaṭī	50	IV ^b	Basra	51	0

^b Abū Bakra Nufay' b. Masrūḥ (or al-Ḥārith) lacks an entry in the *ṣaḥāba* section of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*; he was a freed captive after the raid of al-Ṭā'if according to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr; *al-Istī'āb*, on the margin of *al-Isāba*, III, 568.

Table 6.3: Minor *ṣaḥāba*: 20–50 *aṭrāf*

Name	Date	Tab	City/region	Ibn Ḥanbal	Bukhārī
Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq	13	I	Medina	46	22
Zayd b. Thābit	45	III	Medina	44	8
Abū Qatāda al-Anṣārī	54	II	Medina, Kufa	43	13
Sahl b. Sa'd al-Anṣārī	91	III	Medina	41	41
Zayd b. Arqam	68	III	Kufa	40	6

Table 6.3 (*cont.*)

Name	Date	Tab	City/Region	Ibn Ḥanbal	Bukhārī
Thawbān <i>mawlā</i> Rasūl Allāh	54	III	Ramla, Ḥims	38	0
Usāma b. Zayd	54	II	Syria, Medina	37	16
Ibn Abī Awfā'	86	III	Kufa	34	15
Salama b. al-Akwā'	74	III	Medina	32	20
al-Aslamī					
Mu'adh b. Anas al-Juḥanī	75	na ^d	Egypt	31	0
'Amr b. al-'Āṣ	51	III	Egypt	28	3
al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr	65	III	Kufa	28	6
Zayd b. Khālīd al-Juḥanī	78	III	Medina	27	5
Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī'	na	II	Kufa, Medina	27	0
'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr	73	V	Medina	26	10
Jarīr b. 'Abdullāh	54	IV	Jazīra	25	10
Maymūna <i>bint</i> al-Ḥārith	61	Wives	Medina	25	7
al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām	36	I	Medina, Iraq	22	9
Jubayr b. Mu'ṭ'im al-Nawfalī	57	III	Medina	22	9
'Awf b. Mālīk al-Ashja'ī	73	III	Ḥims	22	1
'Abdullāh b. al-Mughaffal	59	III	Basra	21	0
Abū Rāfi' al-Qibṭī, <i>mawlā</i> Rasūl Allāh	40	II	Medina	20	1
'Ammār b. Yāsir	37	I	Kufa	20	4
Faḍāla b. 'Ubayd al-Anṣārī	53	II	Syria	20	0

^c His name is 'Abdullāh b. 'Alqama.

^d Mu'adh b. Anas lacks an entry in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*; neither Ibn Hajar nor Ibn 'Abd al-Barr indicates his date of conversion; *al-Isāba*, III, 426 and 366 (margin).

^e His name is 'Uqba b. 'Amr, and he probably died during Mu'āwiya's reign.

What does this data tell us besides the interesting observation that Ibn Ḥanbal included twice as many *ḥadīth* on the authority of 'Alī than those on the authority of 'Umar, whereas al-Bukhārī selected twice as many 'Umar *ḥadīth* as 'Alī ones? The members of the first table, namely the fifteen most prolific *ṣaḥābī ḥadīth*-transmitters in the

Musnad, consist of six *ṣaḥāba* who were prominent in the *faḍā'il* sub-chapters that we examined,²³⁹ two who were mentioned in half of the sources,²⁴⁰ and seven who received either negligible or no recognition in these books. This last group includes Abū Hurayra, Anas b. Mālik, Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, and 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, Umm Salama, and Abū Umāma; only three of these companions are found among Ibn Sa'd's *ṣaḥāba* who "gave *fat-was* and were models during the time of the Prophet and afterwards."²⁴¹ While the presence of such distinguished *ṣaḥāba* as 'Alī, 'Umar, Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, and 'Ā'isha among this group of fifteen prolific *ḥadīth*-transmitters is to be expected, the prominent presence of mildly praised men such as Abū Hurayra, Anas, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, and 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr and even relatively unknown men such as Jābir b. 'Abdullāh and Abū Umāma al-Bāhilī comes as a surprise in light of the previously examined early Sunnī books.

The forty-one *ṣaḥāba* found in the two charts of 'minor' transmitters in the *Musnad* include relatively few of the most exalted Companions of the Prophet. Ubayy, 'Uthmān, and Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ transmitted between 50 and 100 *atrāf*, and Abū Bakr, Usāma b. Zayd, Jarīr b. 'Abdullāh, al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām, and 'Ammār b. Yāsir transmitted a mere 20–50 *atrāf*. A particularly surprising case is Zayd b. Thābit, who received so much praise in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* for his religious knowledge and yet transmitted a mere 44 *atrāf* in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. Twenty-five of these *ṣaḥāba* lack any recognition in the *faḍā'il* sub-chapters of the four books that I analyzed above,²⁴² and seven of them fail to transmit a single *ḥadīth* in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.²⁴³ Several religious advisors to the caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar named by Ibn Sa'd such as Abū l-Dardā', Abū Dharr, Mu'adh b. Jabal, and the previously mentioned Ubayy,

'Uthmān, and Zayd b. Thābit, are found among these modest contributors to the *Musnad*. Finally, a clique of 'Alī's most inveterate enemies, such as al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr, Mu'āwiya, 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, Samura b. Jundab, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba, and Ibn al-Zubayr, are also among these minor *ḥadīth*-transmitters, while Abū Ayyūb and 'Ammār are the only pro-'Alī supporters found among them.

One other topic that should be addressed is the relationship between a *ṣaḥābī*'s death date and magnitude of his or her *ḥadīth* transmission in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. It is not a coincidence that the seven most prolific *ṣaḥāba* of the *Musnad* all lived well into the reign of Mu'āwiya and three of them even witnessed the second *fitna* of 60–73/680–92. What is more surprising is just how many long-lived *ṣaḥāba* did *not* transmit a large amount of *ḥadīth*; eleven of the eighteen 'minor *ṣaḥāba*' who transmitted 50–100 *atrāf* and nineteen of the twenty-three minor *ṣaḥāba* in the 20–50 *atrāf* range lived through at least half of the reign of Mu'āwiya if not longer. One would expect far more than 41 *atrāf* from Sahl b. Sa'd (d. 91/710) of Medina and 34 *atrāf* from the Kufan Ibn Abī Awfā (d. 86/705), both of whom embraced Islam prior to the conquest of Mecca, especially given the fact that 91 *atrāf* were traced back to Mu'adh b. Jabal who passed away over sixty years prior to them. While early death dates have been used from at least the time of al-Wāqidī as an explanation for the minor contribution to the *ḥadīth* literature by such luminaries as Abū Bakr, 'Uthmān, Ubayy, Abū l-Dardā', and al-Zubayr (not to mention Ṭalḥa and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf who transmitted fewer than twenty *atrāf*), it should be clear from these charts that a lengthy life was by no means a guarantee for a privileged role in *ḥadīth* transmission, even though it was a prerequisite for the most prolific *ṣaḥāba*.

The most important observation with regard to this project is that the structure of Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* provides an implicit argument for the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba*. None of the seven most significant *ṣaḥābī* transmitters was among the highly lauded Muhājirūn, although three of them did receive sub-chapters in support of their merits in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba, and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Kitāb faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba*. Fifty-three men and three women, the majority of whom entered Islam after the battle of Uḥud, transmitted at least twenty *atrāf* in the *Musnad*. Most of these men lacked any distinction in the fields of precedence in conversion, warfare, and knowledge in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, although the most

²³⁹ These six are 'Ā'isha, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Alī, and 'Umar.

²⁴⁰ Abū Mūsā and Abū Dharr.

²⁴¹ Abū Hurayra, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, and 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-Āṣ.

²⁴² 'Uqba b. 'Amir al-Juhānī, al-Barā' b. 'Āzib, al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr, 'Imrān b. Ḥuṣayn, Burayda b. al-Ḥuṣayb, Samura b. Jundab, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, Jābir b. Samura, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba, Abū Bakra al-Thaqafī, Abū Qatāda, Sahl b. Sa'd, Zayd b. Arqam, Thawbān *mawlā* Rasūl Allāh, Ibn Abī Awfā, Salama b. al-Akwā', Mu'adh b. Anas, Zayd b. Khālīd, Ibn al-Zubayr, Maymūna *bint* al-Ḥārith, Jubayr b. Mu't'im, 'Awf b. Mālik, 'Abdullāh b. al-Mughaffāl, Abū Rāfi' al-Qibī, and Faḍāla b. 'Ubayd.

²⁴³ Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī, Abū Bakra al-Thaqafī, Thawbān, Mu'adh b. Anas, Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī, 'Abdullāh b. al-Mughaffāl, and Faḍāla b. 'Ubayd.

exceptional individuals are almost all present. Finally, the *Musnad* could only have contributed to the rehabilitation of 'Ā'isha after the Battle of the Camel, Ibn 'Umar and Abū Hurayra after their unwillingness to support 'Alī's star-crossed counter-caliphate, and 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr's decision to stick by his father and Mu'āwiya in the battle of Ṣiffin and its aftermath. Other *ṣaḥāba* who rejected 'Alī's authority and raised the eyebrows of the Zaydiyya and Baghdādī Mu'tazila, such as Mu'āwiya, 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, al-Mughīra, and Samura are also included in the *Musnad*, although the *musnad* format makes it quite easy to ignore their relatively minor contributions should one wish to do so. Indeed, one of the only theoretically superior qualities of the *musnad* format to the topically arranged *muṣannaf* is the inherent facility for one to locate and obtain the teachings of particular *ṣaḥāba* whom one prefers and avoid those whom one dislikes. In other words, an Imāmī Shī'ī could extract easily the transmissions of 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, Abū Dharr, Salmān, and Jābir b. 'Abdullāh from Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, while a Zaydī might also copy the *ḥadīth* of 'Ā'isha, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Mas'ūd, Umm Salama, and Mu'ādh b. Jabal. The Sunnī adherent to the dogma of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* might feel obliged, by contrast, to copy Ibn Ḥanbal's entire 30,000-*ḥadīth* *Musnad* since the identity of the *ṣaḥābī* from whom the *ḥadīth* was transmitted would be of no theoretical importance and the inclusion of his or her material would be based solely upon the endurance and patience of the copyist. Ibn Ḥanbal's "Sunnī solution" to the perpetual problem of the intra-*ṣaḥāba* warfare is significantly closer to the classical doctrine of the "collective probity of the Companions" than the approaches put forth in the books of his contemporaries al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Ibn Abī Shayba, and Ibn Sa'd, and the vastness of his enterprise certainly laid the groundwork for his pupil Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī to articulate explicitly this uniquely Sunnī belief.

VI.5 Conclusions

The doctrine of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* is rarely presented as a core foundational principle of Sunnī Islam. The notion that all of the witnesses of the Prophet Muḥammad were honest reporters of what they saw and heard has been questioned rarely by Sunnī or Western scholars, the latter of whom tend to ignore the

great mass of them in their narratives of early Islamic history. This chapter built upon Madelung's recent book *The Succession to Muḥammad* and endeavored to demonstrate the extraordinary significance of the intra-*ṣaḥāba* wars that traumatized the nascent Muslim Community during its first three decades of post-prophetic existence.

The Imāmī Shī'ī position with regard to the *ṣaḥāba* in both its *mufawwiḍa* and *muqassira* manifestations exhibited extreme historiographical, exegetical, and even cosmological interpretations of reality. Al-Kashshī's reports on the authority of Muḥammad al-Bāqir and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq that all of the *ṣaḥāba* save Salmān al-Fārisī, Abū Dharr, and al-Miqdād, apostasized during the *rida* and that only four additional ones returned to the fold of Islam represents an extraordinary feat of sectarian historiography. Al-Kulaynī's *mufawwiḍa* approach avoids the historical question of the *rida* altogether and relies instead upon creative Qur'ānic exegesis, a customized Sunnī *ḥadīth* about the pillars of Islam, and an unswerving belief in the supernatural knowledge of twelve men and boys, most of whom are never even quoted in his book. These books not only defy most sensitive readings of history and the Qur'ān, but seek to erase the thousands of men and women who literally built the foundations of Islam and spread it throughout the Fertile Crescent. This feat is accomplished by means of the creation of a "pillar of Islam," the Imamate of 'Alī, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, and nine of his descendants, for which neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunnī *ḥadīth* provide unambiguous proof. While the Imāmī rejection of the *ṣaḥāba* who fought against 'Alī during his counter-caliphate can be seen as a logical reaction to these traumatic events, the rejection of highly learned *ṣaḥāba* such as Ubayy b. Ka'b, Mu'ādh b. Jabal, and Ibn Mas'ūd because they did not give 'Alī the *bay'a* at the death of the Prophet is difficult to comprehend unless one, like al-Kulaynī, considers the acknowledgement of the Imamate of 'Alī (*al-walāya*) to be one of the pillars of Islam.

The Zaydī/Baghdādī Mu'tazilī attitudes towards the *ṣaḥāba* represents a moderate path between the Imāmī Shī'ī rejectionism and the Sunnī blanket acceptance of them. Only a small number of *ḥadīth*-transmitting *ṣaḥāba*, such as Abū Hurayra, Mu'āwiya, 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, Samura b. Jundab, al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr, and al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba are rejected by partisans of these two groups for the simple reason that these men either cursed or insulted 'Alī, or were criticized as weak *ḥadīth*-transmitters. Their rational argument for the superiority of 'Alī over all other *ṣaḥāba*, including Abū Bakr, was

based upon his qualities of precedence in conversion to Islam, courage in warfare, religious knowledge, and, on occasion, asceticism. Unlike the Imāmī Shī'a, who would consider 'Alī the best in all of these categories, the Zaydiyya and Baghdādī Mu'tazila were happy to mention other *ṣaḥāba* who excelled in these qualities and were satisfied that only 'Alī was considered *among* the best in all four categories. Although this argument failed to attract many early Sunnīs, it is possible that the moderate position of the Zaydiyya and Baghdādī Mu'tazila contributed to the profound respect for 'Alī and his family found in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba, and *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim that seems stronger than the fourth-place status accorded him by Sunnī doctrine.

The three third/ninth century Sunnī approaches to the *ṣaḥāba* that I discussed provide hints as to how the doctrine of their collective probity came into existence. The *faḍā'il* sub-chapters of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba, and *Kitāb faḍā'il al-ṣaḥāba* elevated twenty *ṣaḥāba* to a particularly high status. The high percentage of both Qurayshī Muhājirūn and Hāshimīs among the most celebrated twenty *ṣaḥāba* denigrated the role of individual Anṣār in the birth of Islam, although it did secure the authority of most of the leaders on the losing side of the Battle of the Camel. The absence of sub-chapters of *faḍā'il* for many of the opponents of 'Alī in the wars during his counter-caliphate indicates that the individual *ḥadīth* of this genre played a minimal role in the Sunnī adoption of the belief in the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba*.

Ibn Sa'd's prosopographical approach to the *ṣaḥāba* led him to include information about a vast number of the first generation of Muslims. His citation of al-Wāqidi's opinion that all *ṣaḥāba* were Imāms may have led him to refrain from criticizing the reliability of any of them and certainly inspired him to track down as many of them as possible. While Ibn Sa'd shuns the hot question of the "best *ṣaḥābi*," he does provide clues as to the most excellent warriors, earliest converts, most erudite scholars, and most pious ascetics among the first generation of Muslims. Despite the fact that Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Mu'adh b. Jabal, and 'Umar are not explicitly designated as rivals to 'Alī, they certainly shine with similar brilliance in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. Ibn Sa'd's masterpiece is certainly in harmony with the Sunnī notion of the collective probity of the Companions of the Prophet and preserves precious information about

hundreds of these religious authorities that may otherwise have been lost over the course of history.

Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad* is the most overt champion of the principle of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* among the third/ninth century Sunnī books surveyed in this chapter. Numerous men whom history may have ignored, such as Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, and Anas b. Mālik, serve as major religious authorities alongside famous *ṣaḥāba* like 'Alī, 'Ā'isha, 'Umar, Ibn 'Umar, and Ibn Mas'ūd. Even more striking is the presence of partisans of the fiercely anti-'Alī Umayyad regime, such as Abū Hurayra, al-Nu'mān b. Bashīr, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba, 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, Samura b. Jundab, and Mu'āwiya himself, as authoritative *ḥadīth*-transmitters. Finally, relatively unknown *ṣaḥāba*, such as Thawbān, Salama b. al-Akwā', and Abū Mas'ūd al-Anṣārī contribute almost equally to Ibn Ḥanbal's book as the towering figures of Abū Bakr, Zayd b. Thābit, and 'Ammār b. Yāsir. Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, like Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, exudes the spirit of the collective probity of *ṣaḥāba* regardless of their roles in the internecine conflicts of the first thirty years of post-prophetic Islamic history, and suggests that the global *activity* of *ḥadīth* compilation contributed more to the Sunnī adoption of the principle of the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* than the actual transmissions stressing the merits of individual Muslims found among these reports.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE METHODS OF ḤADĪTH-TRANSMITTER CRITICISM OF IBN SA'D, IBN MA'IN, AND IBN ḤANBAL

VII.1

The second fundamental principle upon which the third/ninth century *ḥadīth* scholars articulated Sunnī Islam was the original discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism. The two primary means of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism employed by the third/ninth century critics were absolute grades and comparisons between individual scholars. Grades were the most popular technique and consisted of several dozen terms and expressions, the most universally prominent of which were *thiqa* (reliable) and *ḍa'īf* (weak). I traced the emergence of these two terms in connection with Shu'ba, Mālik, and Ibn 'Uyayna in the fourth chapter, and remarked that their students appear to have adopted them, despite the poor state of preservation of their opinions. Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal are the earliest scholars from whom a significant body of critical opinions has survived and are of particular importance for this core Sunnī discipline.¹ After a brief exposition of the most thorough classical explanation of the grades employed by *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics, I shall analyze the

¹ It is for this reason that I have analyzed the earliest compilations of their opinions—*al-Tabaqāt al-kabīr*, al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*, and 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad's *ʿIlal*—instead of al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, which presents all of their opinions in one location for each man. Both al-Dūrī and 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad were the preeminent pupils of their master teachers, and so their reports are of particular value. One of the unintended consequences of this methodological decision was a much lower rate of overlap between the opinions of all three of these men for any individual than one would encounter had I used *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*. It will be clear from the following analyses that al-Dūrī was concerned primarily with Ibn Ma'in's opinions of *unreliable* transmitters, whereas 'Abdullāh was conservative in his transmission of his father's critical opinions. A potentially more fruitful early source for a comparative analysis of Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal's critical opinions is Ibn Abī Ḥātim's *Kuāb al-jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, as the compiler has assembled a large number of their opinions from a variety of sources.

grades and their respective frequencies of employment by Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Hanbal, and conclude with a comparison of their evaluations of a few hundred *ḥadīth*-transmitters. A final topic that will be addressed is the relatively minor role of sectarian labels in the three sources under scrutiny. The findings of this chapter demonstrate both individual preferences for the employment of specific grades and a high degree of consensus as to the reliability (or lack thereof) of a substantial number of these men.

One of the most extensive discussions of the grades used by Sunnī *ḥadīth* critics is found in al-Suyūṭī's commentary on al-Nawawī's abridgement of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddima* entitled *Tadrib al-rāwī fī sharḥ taqrib al-Nawāwī*.² I mentioned earlier that the twenty-third chapter of Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ's *Muqaddima* includes a discussion of the expressions used in *ḥadīth* criticism that was based on Ibn Abī Ḥātim's four categories of validation (*ta'dīl*) and four categories of invalidation (*jarḥ*). Al-Suyūṭī's commentary includes the opinions of al-Dhahabī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥusayn al-'Irāqī (d. 806/1403–4), and Ibn Hajar, regarding the valences of grades not mentioned by al-Nawawī in his abridgement, many of which are found in the earliest sources of this discipline. The following is a translation of this informative section of *Tadrib al-rāwī*; al-Suyūṭī's comments have been summarized in the footnotes.

Topic 13: The expressions used in *ḥadīth* criticism. Ibn Abī Ḥātim arranged them into appropriate categories. The categories of validation are the following:

- [1] The highest [terms] are trustworthy (*thiqa*), or precise (*mutqin*), or reliable (*thabt*), or proof (*hujja*), or truthful memorizer (*'adlun ḥāfiẓ*), or exact (*dābiṭ*)³
- [2] The second [category] is sincere (*ṣadūq*) or 'occupying a position of sincerity' (*maḥalluhu al-ṣidq*), or 'not bad' (*lā ba's bihi*);⁴ Ibn Abī Ḥātim said that we write down the *ḥadīth* of these people and consider it *ḥayṣun fihī* [as evidence when making a decision]. It is the second level, as we have said, because these expression do not

² Al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib al-rāwī*, I, 186–8.

³ Al-Suyūṭī remarks that the both al-Dhahabī and al-'Irāqī added a category that is higher than this: if one (or more) of these expressions is repeated, such as *thiqa thiqa*, or *thiqa thabt*, or *thiqa hujja*, or *thiqa ḥāfiẓ*. As for Ibn Hajar (called Shaykh al-Islām by al-Suyūṭī), there exists an even higher level than this, namely anything in the superlative form (*af'al*), such as *awthaq al-nās* or *athbat al-nās*, or related expressions; al-Suyūṭī adds *lā athbata minhu* or *man mithlu fulān*.

⁴ Al-'Irāqī adds to this category *ma'mūn*, *khayyir*, and *laysa bihi ba's*.

indicate exactitude (*dabt*), and we are cautious with this type of *ḥadīth* as we previously mentioned [in this category]. It is reported that when Yahyā b. Ma'in said "not bad" he meant "trustworthy" (*thiqa*). This case only applied to him, as transmitted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim on the authority of the scholars of this art.⁵

- [3] The third [category] is Shaykh. His *ḥadīth* are written and considered [evidence when making decisions]⁶
- [4] The fourth [category] is "pious [with regard to] *ḥadīth*" (*ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*) and his *ḥadīth* are taken into consideration (*li-l-'itibār*) [when making a judgement].⁷

As for the expressions of invalidation, they are arranged as follows:

- [1] If they say "soft in *ḥadīth*" (*layyin*), then his *ḥadīth* are written and considered as evidence. Al-Dāraqutnī said: When I say "soft in *ḥadīth*," that does not mean that his *ḥadīth* should be rejected, because he is invalidated by something that does not affect his [overall] probity (*'adāla*).⁸
- [2] When they say "not strong" (*laysa bi-qawī*) they write down his *ḥadīth*, but this is worse than "soft."
- [3] If they say "weak in *ḥadīth*" (*da'if al-ḥadīth*), this is worse than "not strong." His *ḥadīth* are not rejected, although [this defect] is taken into consideration.⁹
- [4] If they say "his *ḥadīth* are rejected" (*matrūk al-ḥadīth*), or "weak [in *ḥadīth*]" (*wāhin*), or liar (*kadhdhāb*), then he must be ignored and his *ḥadīth* may not be written.¹⁰

⁵ Al-'Irāqī says that Ibn Ma'in never said "my opinion 'not bad' is the same as my opinion 'trustworthy';" rather, to whomever he applies this term, the person is trustworthy at a lower degree of trustworthiness. He then mentions a report from Ibn Mahdī who, when asked about Abū Khaldā, said "he is *ṣadūq*, *ma'mūn*, *khayyir*," [examples of] *thiqa* are Shu'ba and Sufyān." Also, note that al-Dhahabī considers *maḥalluhu al-ṣidq* lower than *ṣadūq* for linguistic reasons (i.e., it is a *ṣiḡha mubālagha*). Al-'Irāqī also follows him in this regard.

⁶ Al-'Irāqī adds: *maḥalluhu l-ṣidq, ilā l-ṣidq mā huwa, shaykh wasat, mukarrar jayyid al-ḥadīth*, and *ḥasan al-ḥadīth*. Ibn Hajar adds *ṣadūq sayyī' al-hijf, ṣadūq yahimu, ṣadūq lahu awḥām, ṣadūq taghayyara bi-akhirīn*. He also appends to this those who were affiliated with a type of *bid'a*, such as *tashayyū'*, *qadar*, *naṣb*, *irjā'*, and *tahajjum*.

⁷ Al-'Irāqī adds: *ṣadūq in sha'a llāh, anjū an lā ba'sa bihi, suwaylih*; Ibn Hajar adds to this list *maqbul*.

⁸ Al-'Irāqī adds: *fili līn, fili maqāl, du'ifa, yu'raf wa yunkar, laysa bi-dhāk, laysa bi-l-mafin, laysa bi-hujja, laysa bi-'umda, laysa bi-marḍiyyin, li-l-da'f mā huwa, fili khalaf, takallamū fihī, ma'fūn fihī, sayyī' l-hijf*.

⁹ Al-'Irāqī also mentions: *da'if jaqat, munkar al-ḥadīth, ḥadīthuhu munkar, wāhin da'afūhu*

¹⁰ Al-'Irāqī also mentions: *rudda ḥadīthuhu, raddū ḥadīthahu, mardūd al-ḥadīth, da'if jiddan, wāhin bi-l-marra, tarahū ḥadīthahu, muftarraḥ, muftarraḥ al-ḥadīth, imi bihi, laysa bi-shay', lā yusāwī shay'an, wa waylayhā, matrūk al-ḥadīth, matrūk, tarakūhu, dhāhib, dhāhib al-ḥadīth, sāqit, ḥālik, fili nazar, sakatū 'anhu, lā yu'tabaru bihi, lā yu'tabaru bi-l-ḥadīth, laysa bi-l-thiqa, laysa bi-thiqa, ghayr thiqa wa lā ma'mūn, muttahaḥ bi-l-kadhib or bi-l-waḍ', waylayhā kadhdhāb yakdhibu, dajjal waḍḍā', yada'u, waḍā'a ḥadīthan*.

All of the following expressions are self-explanatory, as we have indicated previously: 'someone from whom the people transmitted' (*fulā-nun rawā 'anhu l-nās*), average (*wasat*), 'mediocre in *ḥadīth*' (*muqārib al-ḥadīth*),¹¹ inconsistent (*mudtarib*), non-authoritative (*lā yuḥtajjū bihi*), unknown (*majhūl*);¹² nothing (*lā shay*); 'not all that' (*laysa bi-dhālika*), 'not that strong' (*laysa bi-dhāk al-qawī*), 'there is a weakness in him' or 'in his *ḥadīth*' (*fīhi aw fī ḥadīthihi da'f*);¹³ 'I do not know of any bad [qualities with regard to him]' (*mā a'lamu bihi ba'san*).¹⁴

VII.2 Ibn Sa'd: Grades

The inclusion of Ibn Sa'd in a comparison with towering critics like Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal requires some explanation, especially in light of my findings in the fourth chapter that only al-Mizzī included him among the master critics. The most important reason for this decision is that Ibn Sa'd was the earliest scholar who composed a book in which a large number of critical grades were included. We are at the mercy of the memories of various pupils of Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal for their opinions, and even those two scholars' works were often little more than disorganized notes rather than books. Another motivating factor for the study of Ibn Sa'd's book is the fact that he evaluated over 1100 men and employed more than thirty grades in this process. A final reason for the selection of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* was its unique inclusion of *quantitative* indicators as to the amount of *ḥadīth* that an individual transmitted, information that is of great value for the eighth chapter.

The following table indicates the number of individuals to whom Ibn Sa'd applied a particular grade in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. Note that many men receive multiple grades, and that certain grades that were applied to fewer than three individuals have not been included.¹⁵

Table 7.1: A Catalog of Grades in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*

Grade	Translation	Tone	Total
1 <i>thiqa</i>	trustworthy	positive	681
2 <i>thiqa in shā'a llāh</i>	trustworthy, hopefully	positive	87
3 <i>da'if</i>	weak	negative	83
4 <i>ma'rūf</i>	known	ambiguous	39
5 <i>ma'mūn</i>	secure	positive	37
6 <i>'ābid</i>	constant worshipper	ambiguous	37
7 <i>ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth/ ṣāliḥ</i>	pious	positive	35
8 <i>'ālim</i>	knower, scholar	ambiguous	32
9 <i>thiqa-ḥujja</i>	trustworthy-authority	positive	28
10 <i>thiqa-thabt</i>	trustworthy-reliable	positive	28
11 <i>thiqa-sadūq</i>	trustworthy-sincere	positive	28
12 <i>warī</i>	pious	ambiguous	26
13 <i>lā yuḥtajjū bihi and laysa bi-ḥujja</i>	not authoritative	negative	26
14 <i>fāḍil</i>	distinguished	positive	17
15 <i>fīhi da'f</i>	weakness in his transmission	negative	17
16 <i>munkar al-ḥadīth</i>	suspect in <i>ḥadīth</i>	negative	12
17 <i>laysa bi-dhāk</i>	not all that	negative	12
18 <i>lahu faḍl</i>	meritorious	positive	12
19 <i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt</i>	trustworthy, authority, reliable	positive	11
20 <i>'ālī</i>	elevated	positive	11
21 <i>sadūq</i>	sincere	positive	10
22 <i>khayyir</i>	munificent	positive	10
23 <i>rafi'</i>	elevated	positive	10
24 <i>matrūk and turika</i>	abandoned, rejected	negative	10
25 <i>ikhtalaḥ/ ighṭalaḥ/ taghayyar</i>	corrupted (when older)	negative	10
26 <i>da'if jiddan</i>	very weak	negative	9
27 <i>Shaykh</i>	senior teacher	positive	8
28 <i>tukullim/ yutakallam fīhi</i>	questionable in transmission	negative	7
29 <i>yudallis</i>	he practices deceptive transmission	negative	7
30 <i>laysa bi-shay'</i>	nothing, worthless	negative	6
31 <i>jāmi'</i>	compiler, comprehensive	positive	4

There are several general observations that merit attention prior to a more detailed analysis of certain of Ibn Sa'd's grades. Two salient aspects of Ibn Sa'd's critical approach are the high percentage of positive grades and the overwhelming dominance of the term *thiqa*. While seventeen of these thirty grades are positive and twelve are negative, it is striking that only *two* of the most frequently employed

¹¹ These three categories are the same as 'Shaykh' ([4] in validation above).

¹² These three categories are equivalent to 'weak in *ḥadīth*' ([3] in invalidation above).

¹³ These categories fall in the same category as 'soft in *ḥadīth*' ([1] in invalidation above).

¹⁴ This is either category [1] of invalidation or category [4] of validation.

¹⁵ Some of these terms will be mentioned in the discussion of Ibn Sa'd's negative grades below.

grades are negative.¹⁶ Ibn Sa'd uses each of the remaining ten negative grades seventeen or fewer times throughout the entire *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. His employment of the grade *thiqa* is, by contrast, staggering, as it appears by itself or in compound expressions in no less than 852 entries of *ḥadīth*-transmitters. The remainder of this discussion of Ibn Sa'd's critical technique will focus on his strategies for the identification of particularly weak scholars, an examination of the recipients of ambiguous grades, and, finally, his application of unique series of positive terms for what must have been, in his opinion, the most reliable *ḥadīth* scholars among his predecessors.

Ibn Sa'd's negative grades run the gamut from gentle warnings that a reliable transmitter made mistakes to harsh language. Examples of trustworthy scholars who made mistakes include 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Abd al-Majīd,¹⁷ Nāfi' b. 'Umar,¹⁸ and Ja'far b. Burqān al-Kilābī.¹⁹ Ibn Sa'd also identifies six reliable men who "probably made errors or were confused" or who "probably transmitted suspect *ḥadīth*."²⁰ An additional eight reliable transmitters—Sa'id b. Abī Sa'id al-Maqbūrī, Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mas'ūdī, Sa'id b. Iyās al-Jurayrī, Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba, Jarīr b. Ḥāzim, al-Ḥajjāj b. Muḥammad, and Muḥammad b. Kathīr—are all identified by Ibn Sa'd as making errors or becoming confused at the end of their lives.²¹ Ibn Sa'd also reports that a few reliable transmitters, like Ibn Ishāq and Isrā'īl b. Yūnus, had their anonymous detractors who considered them weak.²² Finally, a small number of prominent scholars, such as 'Abdullāh b. Wahb, Ḥaḥḥ b. Ghayāth, and even Ibn Ḥanbal's teacher Hushaym b. Bashīr, are identified as having engaged in *tadlīs*, the deceptive

¹⁶ These two grades are *ḍa'īf* (83 uses, plus nine *ḍa'īf jiddan*) and *lā yuḥtaju bihi* (25 uses).

¹⁷ Ibn Sa'd grades this Basran *thiqa*, *fīhi ḍa'īf*; TK 2001, IX, 290–1.

¹⁸ Ibn Sa'd grades this Meccan *thiqa*, *fīhi shay'*; TK 2001, VIII, 56.

¹⁹ Ibn Sa'd grades Ja'far *thiqa-ṣadūq*, *kathīr al-khaṭa'* and remarks that he had *fiqh*, *fatawā*, and *riwāya*; TK 2001, IX, 487–8.

²⁰ These are the Basrans Hammām b. Yahyā (*rubbamā ghalīṭa*), Hammād b. Salama (*rubbamā ḥaddatha bi-l-ḥadīth munkar*), and Abū Dāwūd al-Tayālīsī (*rubbamā ghalāṭa*); Ishāq b. Yūsuf al-Azraq of Wāsiṭ (*rubbamā khulīṭa*); Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd b. Ibrāhīm of Medina (*rubbamā akhṭa'a fī ḥadīth*); and 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Amr b. Abī l-Walīd (*rubbamā akhṭa'a*) of northern Iraq; see TK 2001, IX, 281, 282, 299, 317, 324, 490.

²¹ The expression is *ighṭalata* (or *ikhṭalata* or *taghayyar*) *fī ākhīr 'umrih*. See TK 2001, VII, 424; VIII, 460, 486; IX, 260, 273, 278, 335, 495, respectively. Note that Dickinson has labeled this type of criticism as "conditional;" Dickinson, *The Development of Early Sunnite Ḥadīth Criticism*, 93–4.

²² The expression used is *minhum man yastaḍ'ifuhū*; TK 2001, VII, 552; VIII, 495.

act of attributing the *ḥadīth* that one heard from a weak teacher to a more reliable one from whom different material was heard.²³

Ibn Sa'd employs several of the negative grades found in Ibn Abī Ḥātim's first, third, and fourth categories of invalidation that were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Al-Suyūṭī quoted al-'Irāqī's opinion that the terms 'not authoritative', 'not all that', and 'questionable transmission' were the mildest form of invalidation, and the table above illustrates that Ibn Sa'd used these terms in moderation. His favorite grade to indicate the quality of weakness in a *ḥadīth*-transmitter was *ḍa'īf*, and the majority of scholars who received it were natives of Iraq.²⁴ Several particularly harsh terms for transmitters found in both *Tadrīb al-rāwī* and Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* are 'very weak', 'abandoned', and 'worthless', and from these signifiers one can derive the following table of Ibn Sa'd's fifteen least favorite *ḥadīth*-transmitters:

Table 7.2: Ibn Sa'd's least favorite *ḥadīth* transmitters

	Name	City	Ṭab	Grade	Reference (TK 2001)
1	Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh	Basra	4	<i>matrūk</i>	IX, 253
2	'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam	Medina	6	<i>ḍa'īf jiddan</i>	VII, 592
3	Abū Juzayy Naṣr b. Ṭarīf	Basra	5	<i>laysa bi-shay'</i> , <i>turika ḥadīthuhu</i>	IX, 285
4	Al-Ajlāḥ b. 'Abdullāh al-Kindī	Kufa	4	<i>ḍa'īf jiddan</i>	VIII, 469
5	'Amr b. Abī l-Miqdam al-'Ijlī	Kufa	6	<i>laysa bi-shay'</i>	VIII, 505
6	'Amr b. Shimr al-Ju'fī	Kufa	6	<i>ḍa'īf jiddan</i> , <i>matrūk</i>	VIII, 501
7	'Amr b. 'Ubayd	Basra	4	<i>laysa bi-shay'</i>	IX, 272

²³ The entry for Ibn Wahb reads: *kāna kathīra l-'ilm*, *thiqa fī mā qāla ḥaddathanā wa kāna yudallīs*; TK 2001, IX, 527. The entry for Ḥaḥḥ reads: *kāna thiqaṭan ma'mūnan thabtan illā annahu kāna yudallīs*; *ibid.*, VIII, 512. Hushaym's entry in the most detailed: *wa kāna thiqaṭan kathīra l-ḥadīth thabtan yudallīsu kathīran*; *fa-mā qāla fī ḥadīthihi akhbarānā fa-huwa ḥujjatun*, *wa mā lam yaqul fīhi akhbarānā fa-laysa bi-shay'*; *ibid.*, IX, 315. Other men whom Ibn Sa'd accuses of *tadlīs* are Abū Usāma Hammād b. Usāma, 'Aththām b. 'Alī, 'Umar b. 'Alī al-Muqaddamī, and even Anas b. Mālik's major pupil Ḥumayd b. Abī Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl.

²⁴ Ibn Sa'd labels as *ḍa'īf* a total of 83 men: 28 Kufans, 17 Basrans, 7 Medinans, 7 Meccans, 5 Baghdadis, 5 Northern Iraqis (Jazīra), 5 Syrians, 4 inhabitants of Wāsiṭ, 2 Khurāsānis, 2 Egyptians, and al-Hudhayl b. Bilāl al-Fazārī of al-Madā'in. Sixty of these men (72%) are Iraqis.

Table 7.2 (cont.)

	Name	City	Tab	Grade	Reference (TK 2001)
8	Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī	Kufa	4	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	VIII, 464
9	Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl	Marw	na	<i>matruk</i>	IX, 382
10	Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī	Kufa	5	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	VIII, 478–9
11	al-Muṭṭalib b. Ziyād	Kufa	7	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	VIII, 509
12	Ṭalḥa b. 'Amr al-Ḥaḍramī	Mecca	4	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	VIII, 56
13	'Ubayda b. Mu'attib al-Ḍabbī	Kufa	4	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	VIII, 474
14	'Uthmān b. Miqṣam al-Burī	Basra	5	<i>laysa bi-shay', turika ḥadīthuhu</i>	IX, 285
15	Yahyā b. Salama b. Kuhayl	Kufa	6	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	VIII, 501

The data in this table sheds much-needed light on the origins of thoroughly unreliable transmitters. It is striking that the earliest group of these men lived during the fourth *ṭabaqa*, roughly at the turn of the first Islamic century, a generation prior to Shu'ba and the origins of *ḥadīth* criticism. Even more fascinating is the geographical distribution of these earliest weak transmitters, as Ibn Sa'd suggests that this cancer appeared simultaneously in Basra, Kufa, and Mecca, although the deepest roots were sunk in the first two of these cities. Basra seems to have been free from extremely unreliable transmitters, in the eyes of Ibn Sa'd during the two previous generations to his, while Kufa had a trio of defective transmitters in the sixth *ṭabaqa* and weathered al-Muṭṭalib b. Ziyād in the seventh. Given Ibn Sa'd's positive attitude towards the vast majority of *ḥadīth*-transmitters whom he graded in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, it is clear that these fifteen men must have been a particularly unsavory lot to merit the harsh marks that they received.

Four ambiguous grades warrant a closer attention due to their relatively high frequency of appearance in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. The term *ma'rūf* is found in twenty-nine cases as the unique grade and in only ten as a supplementary comment.²⁵ Six of the latter set of cases

²⁵ Note that the opposite term 'not *ma'rūf*' occurs only once in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* for the first *ṭabaqa* Kufan Suwayd b. Jahbal al-Ashja'ī who heard *ḥadīth* from 'Alī; TK 2001, VIII, 350.

include trustworthy scholars, two are moderately reliable, and two are evaluated by the negative expression 'not all that'.²⁶ As for the men for whom *ma'rūf* is their only qualitative grade, nineteen of them are Iraqi, seven from Syria, and only one from each of the cities of Mecca and Medina. None of these men appears to have played much of a role in the greater project of *ḥadīth* transmission, either, for Ibn Sa'd identified only six who disseminated 'some *ḥadīth*', eleven who shared 'few *ḥadīth*', and the *tābi'ī* Ka'b b. Sūr who did not transmit a single report.²⁷ One final observation about the ambiguous grade *ma'rūf* is that the majority of men to whom Ibn Sa'd applied it were members of the first two generations of the *tābi'ūn*, and it is striking that al-Ḥasan b. Thābit of Kufa is the only man living after the fourth *ṭabaqa* for whom this term is his sole grade.²⁸

The second ambiguous grade in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is '*ālim*', the singular of the well known Arabic word for scholars, '*ulamā'*'. Like *ma'rūf*, '*ālim*' appears as both an independent and a supplementary grade. An interesting feature of Ibn Sa'd's use of this word is that it serves as the sole grade for eight of the men of the frontier lands (*al-awāṣim wa l-thughūr*), a Syrian, and eight Medinans. Clearly this term was most popular in reference to scholars of the Ḥijāz and northern Syria regions, unlike the Kufan-centered grade *ma'rūf*.²⁹ Even more impressive is the fact that all of the men to whom '*ālim*' is applied as a supplementary grade are either *thiqa* or *thiqa-ḥujja*,

²⁶ Four of these trustworthy scholars are first *ṭabaqa tābi'ūn* of Kufa: Ḥabīb b. Ṣuhbān al-Asadī, Aws b. Ḍam'aj, Ḥujr b. 'Adī, and 'Alī b. Rabī'a al-Azdī; TK 2001, VIII, 286, 332, 337, 345. Both weak ones are also first *ṭabaqa tābi'ūn* Kufans: Ḥubayra b. Yarīm and Ḥujayya b. 'Adī al-Kindī; *ibid.*, VIII, 290, 344. The remaining men who received the supplementary grade of *ma'rūf* are Kināna b. Nu'aym of Basra (*thiqa in shā'a llāh*), al-Faḍl b. 'Anbasa of Wāsiṭ (*thiqa*), 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Aḥ' al-'Ijlī of Baghdad (*ṣadūq-in shā'a llāh*), and Sulaym b. 'Amir of Syria (*thiqa*); *ibid.*, IX, 226, 317, 335, and 468.

²⁷ Ka'b is the famous Basran who is reported to have come forward with a *muḥṣaf* at the Battle of the Camel in an effort to prevent bloodshed and was killed by a random arrow; see TK 2001, IX, 90–2. Madelung suppresses Ibn Sa'd's report in favor of a contradictory one from al-Balādhūrī, which puts Ka'b in the battle on 'Ā'isha's side, where he was killed, and states instead that a partisan of 'Alī was the one who was struck by the arrow prior to the battle; *Succession*, 167–72.

²⁸ He was of the seventh *ṭabaqa*; TK 2001, VIII, 518. Ibn Ḥajar evaluates him as *ṣadūq*, *yughrib* and reports that he has at least one report in the *Sunan* of al-Nasā'ī; *Taqrīb*, 99.

²⁹ The only Iraqis who received this label are the Kufans Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ, al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba, and al-Qāsim b. Ma'n, the Baghdādī Abū l-Qāsim *zawj bint* Abī Muslim, and the venerable al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.

including luminaries such as Mālik b. Anas, Mujāhid b. Jabr, 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.³⁰ There is no indication, in other words, of a recipient of the 'ālim grade as being unreliable, and much to suggest that it is positive. Furthermore, the fact that Ibn Sa'd reports that fifteen of these transmitted 'many ḥadīth' testifies to their significance in the project of ḥadīth compilation, as is their presence across all seven *ṭabaqāt* of Islamic history.³¹

The final two ambiguous grades, *warī'* and 'ābid, are among a small group of expressions that Ibn Sa'd uses to identify particularly pious individuals among the ḥadīth folk.³² Medinans and Basrans dominate this group of sixty men, and the majority of them receive the appellation 'ābid.³³ This is in contrast with Kufa, ten of whose men are recognized with the word 'ābid and only Muḥammad b. Sūqa received *warī'*.³⁴ These terms serve as supplementary grades in the vast majority of the cases, and only Abū Bakr al-Nahshalī, Layth b. Abī Sulaym, and 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abī Rawwād received less than a *thiqa* grade among these piety-minded transmitters.³⁵ Once again, there are extremely prominent men among the recipients of this qualitatively ambiguous term, such as Sa'id b. al-Musayyab, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Mālik b. Anas, Ḥasan b. Ḥayy, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, and Ibn 'Awn.³⁶ Finally, even though Ibn Sa'd does

³⁰ TK 2001, VII, 570; VIII, 27, 28, 517; IX, 157.

³¹ The majority of men who were considered to be 'ālim falls in the fourth to seventh *ṭabaqāt* of Medinans (12 men).

³² Two other words that suggest piety found in *al-Ṭabaqat al-kabīr* are *nāsik* (12 men) and *zāhid* (three men). Included among the group who are distinguished by the term 'ābid are several "strenuous worshipers" (*ubbād mujtahidūn*), such as the first *ṭabaqa* Kufans Mi'ḍad b. Yazīd al-'Ijlī, 'Amr b. 'Utba al-Sulamī, and Suwayd b. Maḥ'aba, the Syrian Abū Bakr b. 'Abdullāh b. Abī Maryam, the Medinan 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. al-Munkadir (whose father was also a famed piety-minded scholar), and the Basran Sulaymān al-Taymī.

³³ Twenty-seven Medinese and eleven Basrans received either *warī'* or 'ābid; only Ibn Abī Dhī'b of Medina and Muslim b. Yaṣār of Basra received both grades under discussion; TK 2001, VII, 558 and IX, 185.

³⁴ TK 2001, VIII, 458. The remaining members of this group include the Baghdadīs Mardawayh al-Sā'igh, Abū l-Qāsim *zawj bint* Abī Muslim, and Abū Naṣr al-Tammām; 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abī Rawwād of Mecca; Sahl Muzāḥim of Khurāsān; and Ishāq b. Sulaymān of Rayy.

³⁵ The Meccan 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abī Rawwād was graded as *ma'rūf bi-l-ṣalāh*; Layth b. Sulaym received the mark *ṣāliḥ-ḍa'if*; and Abū Bakr al-Nahshalī was a transmitter "whom some declare to be weak" (*minhum man yastaḍ'ifuḥu*); TK 2001, VIII, 55, 468, 499.

³⁶ TK 2001, VII, 119, 209, 324, 570; VIII, 496; IX, 157, 192, 246, 261.

not provide any quantitative indicators for twenty-four of these pious men, he does identify sixteen of them as transmitters of "many ḥadīth" and only six as having transmitted just a few reports.

We saw in the first chart that Ibn Sa'd applied a variety of colorful expressions to a modest group of reliable ḥadīth transmitters. The term *thiqa* is supplemented with the expressions *ma'mūn*, *thabt*, and *ḥujja* in numerous cases, and an impressive coterie of seventeen men are identified with the compound grades *thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn* and *thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn*.³⁷ An equally, if not more, luminous group of ḥadīth scholars are those whom Ibn Sa'd grades as *thiqa-ḥujja-thabt*, as it includes no fewer than four of Ibn Abī Ḥatīm's favorite ḥadīth scholars, as well as earlier men such as Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī and Yaḥyā b. Sa'id al-Anṣārī.³⁸ While these compound expressions all fall within the catalog of terms mentioned by al-Suyūṭī quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Ibn Sa'd uses what appear to be unique terms of praise for an even smaller number of men. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Maṣ'nūr b. al-Mu'tamir, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, Sa'id b. al-Musayyab, and Sulaymān b. Yaṣār all are awarded both the expressions *rafi'* and 'ālī (elevated), and an additional seven men receive at least one of these two terms.³⁹ The most exclusive term of praise employed by Ibn Sa'd is that of *jāmi'* (comprehensive or compiler), which he reserves for the quartet of Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sa'id b. al-Musayyab, and al-Zuhri. My effort to construct a hierarchy of the most reliable transmitters in the eyes of Ibn Sa'd on the basis of his grades can be found in Appendix B of this book.

³⁷ The following eleven men were identified as *thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn*: 1) 'Abdullāh b. Idrīs; 2) Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn; 3) al-Awzā'i; 4) al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī; 5) Ibn al-Mubārak; 6) Mālik b. Anas; 7) Qatāda b. Di'āma; 8) Shu'ba b. al-Hajjāj; 9) Sufyān al-Thawrī; 10) Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh; 11) Yaḥyā b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān. The following six are *thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn*: 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān; Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth; Ma'n b. 'Isā; Sa'id b. al-Musayyab; 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr; Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya. See Appendix B below for references.

³⁸ The four scholars recognized by Ibn Abī Ḥatīm in the *Taqdīm* who were *thiqa-ḥujja-thabt* according to Ibn Sa'd are Mālik, Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Hammād b. Zayd. The remaining men who received this grade are 'Affān b. Muslim, Bakr b. 'Abdullāh al-Muzanī, Ḥabbān b. Hilāl al-Bāhilī, and Hishām al-Dastawā'i. See Appendix B below for references.

³⁹ Those who receive only *rafi'* are 'Abdullāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh, and Yaḥyā b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān; those who received soley 'ālī are Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Hārith, al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba, Muḥammad b. Sīrīn, and 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr.

VII.3 Ibn Ma'in: Grades in al-Dürī's Tārīkh

The observation in the second chapter of this book that al-Dhahabī considered Ibn Ma'in to be among the "severe" *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics is confirmed by this study of his critical opinions as transmitted by his pupil 'Abbās al-Dürī.⁴⁰ Although Ibn Ma'in's use of the lackluster expression 'not bad' (*laysa bihi ba's*) was reported to be equivalent to *thiqa* in the passage of al-Suyūṭī's *Tadrib al-rāwī* translated above,⁴¹ this fact merely brings the number of positive grades that he employs with any frequency in al-Dürī's *Tārīkh* to three.⁴² The terms *laysa bi-shay'*, *ḍa'if*, and *laysa bi-thiqa* are particularly popular in his evaluations, and no fewer than forty-three men were accused of being outright liars (*kadhhab* or *yakdhib*). While Ibn Ma'in's colorful language is restricted to delinquent transmitters, he does identify the most reliable students of prominent scholars by means of comparative grades, something that I shall investigate after a brief exposition of his absolute grades.

Table 7.3: Ibn Ma'in's grades in al-Dürī's Tārīkh

Grade	Translation	Unique ^a	IS ^b	Multiple ^c	Total
1 <i>thiqa</i>	trustworthy	348	116	2	466
2 <i>laysa bi-shay'</i> (LBS)	nothing	193	37	11	241
3 <i>ḍa'if</i>	weak	109	26	3	138
4 <i>laysa bihi ba's</i>	not bad	91	20	4	115
5 <i>laysa bi-thiqa</i> (LBT)	untrustworthy	58	9	9	76
6 <i>laysa ḥadīthuhu bi-shay'</i> (LHBS)	worthless in <i>ḥadīth</i>	46	5	4	55
7 <i>kadhhab/yakdhibu</i>	liar	32	6	5	43
8 <i>ṣāliḥ</i>	pious	18	3	1	22
9 <i>laysa bi-qawī</i>	Not strong	10	3	1	14
10 <i>laysa yuḥtajju bihi</i>	not authoritative	6	7	0	13

⁴⁰ Al-Dhahabī's opinion of Ibn Ma'in is found in *al-Mūḡiḡa*, 83.

⁴¹ This observation is found in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghādādī's *al-Kifāya fī 'ilm al-riwaya* as well; *al-Kifāya*, 38–9.

⁴² These terms are *thiqa*, *laysa bihi ba's*, and *ṣāliḥ*; Nūr Sayf includes the following additional seven positive grades that appear rarely: *thabt*, *thiqa ma'mūn*, *laysa bi-hi ba's-thiqa*, *thiqa-lam yadhkurhu illā bi-khayr*, *lam yadhkurhu illā bi-khayr*, *ṣadūq*, *raḡul ṣidq*, *shaykh ṣadūq*; Nūr Sayf, *Yahyā b. Ma'in wa kitābuhu l-Tārīkh*, I, 91. Note that I have included everyone who received the grade *thiqa*, whether as a compound or unique grade, under the rubric *thiqa* in this section.

Table 7.3 (cont.)

Grade	Translation	Unique	IS	Multiple	Total
11 <i>lā yuktabu 'anhu</i>	His <i>ḥadīth</i> are not copied.	6	3	0	9
12 <i>thabt</i>	reliable	2	7	0	9
13 <i>fī ḥadīthihi ḍa'f</i>	weakness in his transmission	3	2	2	7
14 <i>lam yadhkurhu illā bi-khayr</i>	He spoke only well of him.	6	1	0	7
15 <i>laysa bi-dhāk</i>	not all that	6	1	0	7
16 <i>raḡul sū'</i>	wicked man	5	0	1	6
17 <i>mashhūr</i>	well-known	4	1	0	5
18 <i>ṣadūq</i>	sincere	2	1	1	4
19 <i>laysa bi-ḥadīthihi ba's</i>	his <i>ḥadīth</i> are not bad	3	0	0	3
20 <i>laysa yusāwī shay'an</i>	absolutely worthless	3	0	0	3

^a This column consists of evaluations of men who were not evaluated by Ibn Sa'd in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

^b This column consists of men who were evaluated by Ibn Sa'd in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

^c This column consists of men who received three or more grades from Ibn Ma'in.

This table reveals several qualities of Ibn Ma'in's style of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism. Like Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in employed the grade *thiqa* on a regular basis to a significant number of scholars and the grade *ḍa'if* to those whose transmission justified caution. Both men also use grades such as 'not strong', 'sincere', and 'non-authoritative' in moderation. It is clear, however, that this is where the similarities between these two critics largely end. Ibn Ma'in denigrates a staggering 241 men as 'nothing', 76 as 'untrustworthy', and 55 as transmitters of 'worthless *ḥadīth*', while Ibn Sa'd grades only six men with the first term and none with the remaining two. Ibn Ma'in rarely uses the grade *thabt*, and never employs the marks *ḥujja*, *rafi'*, or *ālī*.⁴³ He did identify forty-eight particularly disgraceful and dishonest *ḥadīth*-transmitters, and a complete table of these men, most of whom were not evaluated by Ibn Sa'd, can be found in Appendix C.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ibn Ma'in did use the term *thiqa-ma'mūn* occasionally, but since it was not clear from the analysis of Ibn Sa'd's use of this term whether it added much value to the grade *thiqa*, it has not been recorded here.

⁴⁴ Al-Dürī's *Tārīkh*, unlike Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, rarely provides any biographical information about the men who are evaluated and often does not even identify their full names. Furthermore, it is thoroughly disorganized, despite a rough

Ibn Ma'in's preferred method of identifying great *ḥadīth*-transmitters was to use superlative and comparative Arabic expressions rather than a combination of positive absolute grades. The phrase "X is more reliable (*athbat*) than Y" and "X is preferable to me (*aḥabbu ilayya*) than Y" are each found over a dozen times in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*. Ibn Ma'in tells us, for example, that Sh'uba is more reliable than Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya,⁴⁵ Wakī' is more reliable than Ibn Abī Zā'idā,⁴⁶ Ḥammād b. Zayd is more reliable than Ḥammād b. Salama,⁴⁷ and that 'Affān b. Muslim's transmission from Ḥammād b. Salama is more reliable than Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn's transmission from him.⁴⁸ Ibn Ma'in's personal preference of Wakī' over 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī is expressed in at least two places in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*,⁴⁹ as is his preference for Abū l-Aḥwaṣ over Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh,⁵⁰ and Warqā's *tafsīr* over the *tafsīrs* transmitted by Shaybān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba.⁵¹

arrangement by geographical region. Finally, while the editor does provide valuable references to other biographical dictionaries for each evaluated individual, there does not exist an index for the book overall, making it nearly impossible to find someone. While a detailed examination of Ibn Ma'in's least favorite *ḥadīth*-transmitters is outside the scope of this project, the table in Appendix C provides a basis for future studies of the men whom the classical *ḥadīth* critics wished had kept away from prophetic material altogether.

⁴⁵ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 272.

⁴⁶ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 37.

⁴⁷ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 188.

⁴⁸ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 221.

⁴⁹ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 395 and 408. Ibn Ma'in invoked the Qur'anic curse of "God, the angels, and the people" (Sūra 2:161) to whomever puts Ibn Maḥdī above Wakī' in the first reference; the second one merely states that transmission from Sufyān al-Thawrī from Wakī' and Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān is preferable to that from Ibn Maḥdī.

⁵⁰ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 52. Abū l-Aḥwaṣ's name is Muḥammad b. Ḥayyān; TK 2001, IX, 355.

⁵¹ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 233. This is an important reference to the existence of some sort of *tafsīr* compilation in the first half of the third/ninth century. Ibn Ma'in explains his preference for Warqā's *tafsīr* because it contains the teachings of Ibn Abī Najīh → Mujāhid whereas the *tafsīr* of Shaybān was based on the exegetical remarks of Qatāda. Ibn Ma'in also indicates his preference for Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba's transmission of Qatāda's *tafsīr* over that of Shaybān in this same reference. Warqā's *tafsīr* is mentioned by Sezgin, but those of Shaybān and Sa'id are not; GAS, I, 37–8. On Warqā's *tafsīr*, see Fred Leemhuis, "MS. 1075 Tafsīr of the Cairene Dār al-Kutub and Mujāhid's Tafsīr," *Proceedings of the Ninth Congress of the Union Européenne des Arabisants et Islamisants* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 169–80. A recension of this *tafsīr* has been published as *Tafsīr Mujāhid* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Sūrātī (Islamabad, n.d.). Al-Ṭabarī cites Warqā's transmissions from Ibn Abī Najīh of Mujāhid's exegetical comments roughly 1000 times in his *tafsīr*, Horst, "Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar at-Ṭabarīs," 297.

Ibn Ma'in also identifies experts of particular bodies of transmissions from prominent early scholars. Examples of this include the absolute superiority of Ḥammād b. Salama with regard to the *ḥadīth* of Thābit al-Bunānī,⁵² Ḥammād b. Zayd with regard to the *ḥadīth* of Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī,⁵³ and the trio Hishām al-Dastawā'ī, al-Awzā'ī, and 'Alī b. al-Mubārak with regard to the material of Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr.⁵⁴ We learn that the most reliable pupils of al-Zuhri were Mālik, Ma'mar, Yūnus, 'Uqayl, Shu'ayb b. Abī Ḥamza, and Ibn 'Uyayna,⁵⁵ that the companions of Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī were Shu'ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī,⁵⁶ and that the best students of Qatāda were Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba, Hishām al-Dastawā'ī, and Shu'ba.⁵⁷ An example of what might be described as 'reciprocal opinions' is Ibn Ma'in's assertion that 'Abd al-Razzāq was more reliable than Hishām b. Yūsuf for transmissions from Ma'mar, but that Hishām was more reliable than 'Abd al-Razzāq for material from Ibn Jurayj.⁵⁸ The most detailed hierarchy of pupils from an individual transmitter is found, not surprisingly, for Ibn Ma'in's favorite scholar, Sufyān al-Thawrī:⁵⁹

A. Best pupils of Sufyān al-Thawrī:⁶⁰

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Ibn al-Mubārak | 4) 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Maḥdī |
| 2) Yaḥyā b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān | 5) Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn |
| 3) Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh | 6) al-Ashja'ī, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Ubayd al-Raḥmān |

⁵² Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 231 and 267.

⁵³ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 231.

⁵⁴ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 143 and 352. Recall that al-Awzā'ī was considered one of the first men to transform his teacher's material into an organized book (*muṣannaf*).

⁵⁵ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 88. This list is further refined in 'Uthmān al-Dārimī's *Tārīkh* that I cited in the fourth chapter, as Mālik is declared to be preferable to Ma'mar, Yūnus, 'Uqayl, and Shu'ayb b. Abī Ḥamza, and Ma'mar is proclaimed to be preferable to Yūnus and Ibn 'Uyayna; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 41–8.

⁵⁶ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 273. Note again that al-Dārimī reports that Ibn Ma'in considered al-Thawrī preferable to Shu'ba with regard to Abū Ishāq's teachings; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 59.

⁵⁷ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 192. Ibn Ḥanbal shared this opinion; see *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 39.

⁵⁸ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 97. Ibn Ma'in studied with both of these men during his journey to Yemen with Ibn Ḥanbal.

⁵⁹ Ibn Ma'in's love for Sufyān al-Thawrī is expressed in several places in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*. He encouraged students to write both the *ḥadīth* and *ra'y* of al-Thawrī and Mālik and al-Dūrī reports that Ibn Ma'in never put anybody above al-Thawrī when concerned with *fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, or *zuhd*; *ibid.*, I, 325 and 74.

⁶⁰ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 329 and 405. Once again, this group is refined by al-Dārimī in his *Tārīkh*: Yaḥyā and Wakī' are preferable to Ibn Maḥdī; Wakī' is preferable to Abū Nu'aym; al-Ashja'ī is merely *ṣāliḥ*; and Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī (who is not mentioned by al-Dūrī) is *thiqa-thiqa*; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 61–3.

B. Second tier pupils of al-Thawrī:⁶¹

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) Yahyā b. Ādam
(d. 203/818) | 5) Qabīṣa b. ‘Uqba (d. 215/830) |
| 2) ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Mūsā ⁶² | 6) Mu‘āwiya b. Hishām al-Qaṣṣār |
| 3) Abū Aḥmad al-Zubayrī ⁶³ | 7) al-Firyābī, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf |
| 4) Abū Hudhayfa
(d. 220/835) ⁶⁴ | 8) Abū Dāwūd al-Ḥafarī
(d. 203/818) ⁶⁵ |

Ibn Ma‘īn’s identification of the most reliable pupils of individual major *ḥadīth* scholars is clearly more nuanced and precise than Ibn Sa‘d’s blanket compound grades, and would be of greater utility to the professional *ḥadīth* compiler forced to choose between the near-identical transmissions of a single *ḥadīth* from multiple pupils of a major scholar, such as Qatāda or Sufyān al-Thawrī. It appears also that Ibn Ma‘īn had his hands full with miserable and mediocre *ḥadīth*-transmitters and saw little reason to praise first/seventh century scholars whose reputations were hardly in dispute in his day.

VII.4 Ibn Ḥanbal: Grades in the ‘*Ilal* of ‘Abdullāh b. Aḥmad

Ibn Ḥanbal employs a diverse set of absolute qualitative grades as well as comparative statements of the type used by Ibn Ma‘īn. I have restricted my analysis of Ibn Ḥanbal’s grades to those found in the ‘*Ilal* of his son ‘Abdullāh for men whom Ibn Sa‘d evaluated in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. The reason for this limitation is the complexity of ‘Abdullāh’s ‘*Ilal*⁶⁶ as well as the primary goal of this chapter,

which is a comparison between the grades of these two men and Ibn Ma‘īn. Therefore, the pool of names that fit these two criteria is only a little under 300 men, as opposed to the significantly larger samples that I examined from Ibn Sa‘d and Ibn Ma‘īn. Despite this limitation, it is still possible to get a sense of Ibn Ḥanbal’s menu of grades and even identify some of his least and most favorite *ḥadīth*-transmitters. The following table provides an overview of the qualitative grades used by Ibn Ḥanbal, according to his son ‘Abdullāh.

Table 7.4: Ibn Ḥanbal’s grades in the ‘*Ilal*

	Grade	Translation	Total
1	<i>thiqa</i>	trustworthy	117
2	<i>laysa bihi ba’s</i>	not bad	44
3	<i>ṣāliḥ</i>	pious	33
4	<i>matrūk/tarakahu</i>	abandoned	23
5	Shaykh	senior teacher	22
6	<i>ḍa‘īf</i>	weak	17
7	<i>munkar, lahu manākīr</i>	suspect <i>ḥadīth</i>	11
8	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>	very trustworthy	11
9	<i>khayyir</i>	munificent	11
10	<i>laysa bi-qawī</i>	not strong	9
11	<i>ḥāfiẓ</i>	<i>ḥāfiẓ</i>	9
12	<i>kadhā wa kadhā</i>	this-and-that	8
13	<i>maḥalluhu al-ṣidq or min ma‘ādin al-ṣidq</i>	honest	7
14	<i>mudṭarib</i>	inconsistent	6
15	<i>ṣadūq</i>	sincere	6
16	<i>yudallīs</i>	deceptive transmission	6
17	<i>thabī</i>	reliable	5
18	<i>laysa bi-shay’</i>	nothing	5
19	<i>laysa bi-dhāk</i>	not all that	4
20	<i>lā yusāwī shay’an</i>	absolutely worthless	4
21	<i>kadhhab/ yakdhibu</i>	liar	3

Ibn Ḥanbal employs a remarkably balanced list of positive and negative grades in the ‘*Ilal*. Once again, the term *thiqa* dominates the critical discourse, followed by two slightly less positive grades, *laysa bihi ba’s* and *ṣāliḥ*. The relatively high number of ‘rejected’ transmitters comes as a bit of a surprise, although the other harsh grades, such as ‘nothing’, ‘absolutely worthless’, and ‘liar’ are quite infrequent.

⁶¹ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 329. Ibn Ma‘īn also states that Abū Aḥmad al-Zubayrī, Yahyā b. Ādam, and al-Firyābī are all equally sound in their transmissions from al-Thawrī and that Abū Dāwūd is either good or better (*khayr*) than them; *ibid.*, I, 268.

⁶² Ibn Ma‘īn informs us that ‘Ubayd Allāh (d. 213/828) was his source for Sufyān al-Thawrī’s *ḥadīth* and that he had a written copy (*ṣaḥīfah*) of it; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 381. ‘Ubayd Allāh was also the source of Sufyān al-Thawrī’s opinions for al-Tirmidhī in his *al-ḥadīth al-ṣaḥīḥ*; see above, III.3, note 15.

⁶³ His name is Muḥammad b. ‘Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr and he died in 203 in al-Ahwāz; TK 2001, VIII, 526.

⁶⁴ His name is Mūsā b. Mas‘ūd and his mother married Sufyān al-Thawrī during his stay in Basra; TK 2001, IX, 305.

⁶⁵ His name is ‘Umar b. Sa‘d and Ibn Sa‘d described him as a hermit (*nāsik*); TK 2001, VIII, 527.

⁶⁶ The chaotic structure of this book has been overcome by means of the alphabetically-arranged encyclopedia of Ibn Ḥanbal’s opinions entitled *Mawsū‘at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* (four volumes) published by ‘Ālam al-Kutub in 1997.

Several new terms, most of which are positive, appear with some regularity: *thiqa thiqa*, *khayyir*, *ḥāfiẓ*, *kadhā wa kadhā*, and *muḍṭarib*. Only one of these grades, *kadhā wa kadhā*, is ambiguous, although a closer examination reveals that most of the recipients of this expression were weak transmitters.⁶⁷ I shall now attempt to articulate Ibn Ḥanbal's least and most favorite *ḥadīth*-transmitters on the basis of his grades in the *ʿIlal* of scholars who were also evaluated by Ibn Sa'd.

Table 7.5: Some of Ibn Ḥanbal's least favorite transmitters in the *ʿIlal*

Name	City	Ṭab ^a	Grade
1 Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh	Basra	4	<i>matrūk</i>
2 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abān	Kufa	8	<i>taraktuhu</i>
3 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ishāq	Kufa	5	<i>matrūk</i> , <i>laysa bi-dhāk</i> , <i>lahu manākīr</i>
4 'Abdullāh b. Wahb	Egypt	6	<i>taraktuhu</i> ^b
5 'Amr b. 'Ubayd	Basra	4	<i>kadhādhāba</i> , <i>tarakahu</i>
6 Ghālīb b. 'Ubayd Allāh	North Iraq	na	<i>taraktuhu</i> ^c
7 al-Ḥārith b. 'Abdullāh al-'A'war	Kufa	1	one of the liars ^d
8 al-Ḥasan b. Dīnār	Basra	5	<i>tarakahu</i> ^e
9 Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī Yahyā	Medina	7	<i>taraka l-nāsu ḥadīthahu</i>
10 'Isā b. Abī 'Isā	Medina	5	<i>laysa yusāwī ḥadīthuhu shay'an</i>
11 Ishāq b. Yahyā b. Ṭalḥa	Medina	5	Shaykh <i>matrūk</i>
12 Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī	Kufa	4	<i>tarakahu</i> ^f
13 Khalaf b. Khalīfa	Wāsiṭ	na	<i>taraktuhu wa lam aktub 'anhu shay'an</i>
14 Muḥammad b. al-Ḥajjāj	Baghdad	na	<i>taraktu (or taraknā) ḥadīthahu</i>
15 Muḥammad b. Sālim	Kufa	5	<i>shibh al-matrūk</i> , <i>mawḍū'ā</i> ^g
16 Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd Allāh al-'Arzamī	Kufa	5	<i>matrūk</i>
17 al-Muthannā b. al-Ṣabbāḥ	Mecca	4	<i>lā yusāwī ḥadīthuhu shay'an</i>
18 al-Ṣalt b. Dīnār	Basra	5	<i>matrūk</i> , LBS
19 Shahr b. Ḥawshab	Syria	2	<i>tarakahu</i> , <i>ḍa'afahu</i>
20 Suwayd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz	Syria	6	<i>matrūk</i>
21 Ṭalḥa b. 'Amr	Mecca	4	<i>matrūk</i> , <i>lā shay'</i>
22 'Ubayda b. Mu'attib al-Dabbī	Kufa	4	<i>fīhi ḍa'f</i> ; <i>tarakahu</i> ^h

⁶⁷ Ibn Ḥanbal reports that two of the eight men who received this grade were declared weak by Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, that another one transmitted suspect *ḥadīth*, and that a fourth one was *muḍṭarib*. Only Ibrāhīm b. al-Muhājir al-Bajālī received this grade as well as the positive *laysa bihi ba's* in the *ʿIlal*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 41–2. Note that in the case of Muslim b. Khālīd al-Zanjī that Ibn Ḥanbal "shook his hand" (*yuharrik yadahu*) when he said *kadhā wa kadhā* in a manner that insinuated that he was not reliable; *ibid.*, III, 347–8.

Table 7.5 (cont.)

Name	City	Ṭab	Grade
23 'Umar b. Ḥaṣṣ al-'Abdī	Baghdad		<i>taraknā ḥadīthahu wa kharraqnāhu</i>
24 'Umar b. Qays, Sandal	Mecca	3	<i>laysa yusāwī ḥadīthahu shay'an</i>
25 Usāma b. Zayd al-Laythī	Medina	5	<i>tarakahu</i> ; <i>lahu manākīr</i>
26 Ya'qūb b. Muḥammad b. 'Isā	Medina	7	LBS, <i>laysa yusāwī shay'an</i>

^a The *ṭabaqa* of each scholar is derived from Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

^b Ibn Ḥanbal rejected Ibn Wahb's *ḥadīth* because he saw him asleep during one of Ibn 'Uyayna's lectures in Mecca. His son reports that he later transmitted *ḥadīth* on Ibn Wahb's authority from one of his pupils; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 299–300. The story of Ibn Wahb's notorious nap is found also in al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 92.

^c Ibn Ḥanbal is merely quoting the opinion of his teacher Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 141–2.

^d Ibn Ḥanbal attributes this opinion to al-Sha'bī; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 213–4.

^e Ibn Ḥanbal attributes this opinion to Ibn al-Mubārak; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 252–3.

^f Ibn Ḥanbal claims that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Mahdī, and even Sufyān al-Thawrī rejected Jābir's *ḥadīth*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 185–7.

^g Ibn Ḥanbal reports that Ibn al-Mubārak rejected him and that Ḥaṣṣ b. Ghiyāth declared him to be weak (*ḍa'afahu*); *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 263, 4.

^h Ibn Ḥanbal mentions that 'Ubayda is on the list of those transmitters whom Ibn al-Mubārak abandoned; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 418.

ⁱ This is Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān's opinion; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 83–4.

Several observations concerning Ibn Ḥanbal's list of disgraceful transmitters are in order. The first one is the geographical diversity of these men. While Iraqis in general, and Kufans in particular, dominate the list, it is important to note that a quarter of the rejected transmitters hail from the Ḥijāz, and an additional three lived in Egypt and Syria. The second point is that the vast majority of weak scholars lived during the second/eighth century and were members of generations who were pupils of the *tābi'ūn* and their successors, much as we found in the case of Ibn Sa'd's least favorite transmitters in Table 7.2. Finally, Ibn Ḥanbal records the opinions of several of the earliest master critics whom we identified in the second chapter, such as Ibn al-Mubārak, Wakī', and, in particular, his teacher Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān. This is a sharp break from Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'īn, both of whom cite specific authorities very infrequently, and was a practice that was adopted by critics such as al-Bukhārī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim during the second half the third/ninth century.

Ibn Ḥanbal employs both absolute and relative grades in his discussion of reliable transmitters in the *ʿIlal*. We learn that ‘Abd al-Wārith b. Saʿīd was more reliable than Ibn ‘Ulayya but inferior to Hammād b. Zayd,⁶⁸ that Abū l-Zubayr Muḥammad b. Muslim had the largest quantity of *ḥadīth* from the *ṣaḥābī* Jābir b. ‘Abdullāh,⁶⁹ that ‘Affān b. Muslim was more reliable than Ibn Mahdī,⁷⁰ and that al-Layth b. Saʿīd was the most sound pupil of Saʿīd al-Maqburī.⁷¹ Ibn Ḥanbal observed that Wakīʿ made more errors (*khaṭaʿ*) than Ibn Mahdī but that Ibn Mahdī committed a greater number of orthographical mistakes (*taṣḥīf*) than Wakīʿ.⁷² Another insightful observation shared by Ibn Ḥanbal is that al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad and Ibn Sīrīn transmitted *ḥadīth* exactly as they were heard, while al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and al-Shaʿbī transmitted merely the message without concern for the exact words.⁷³ Ibn Ḥanbal was particularly interested in the hierarchy of pupils of al-Zuhrī, and told his son that while ‘Alī b. al-Madīnī favored Ibn ‘Uyayna, he himself preferred Mālik because the latter made only two or three mistakes in his transmission rather than the twenty or so errors of the former.⁷⁴ Finally, Ibn Ḥanbal identified four men—Shuʿba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Zāʿida b. Qudāma, and Zuhayr b. Muʿāwiya—as equals whom he graded as *ḥāfiẓ-mutathabbīt* and may be considered four of the most prestigious transmitters in his eyes.⁷⁵

The following table identifies a group of Ibn Ḥanbal’s favorite *ḥadīth* scholars on the basis of the qualitative grades that he assigned to them in ‘Abdullāh’s *ʿIlal*:

Table 7.6: Some of Ibn Ḥanbal’s most reliable *ḥadīth* scholars in the *ʿIlal*

Name	City	Ṭab	Grade	Reference ^a
1 ‘Abd al-ʿAzīz b. Ṣuhayb	Basra	3	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>	II, 365
2 ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Jaʿfar	Medina	5	<i>thiqa thiqa</i> , LBB	II, 310
3 ‘Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān	Kufa	4	<i>ḥāfiẓ, thiqa</i>	II, 379
4 Abū Ghallāb Yūnus b. Jubayr	Basra	2	<i>thabi</i>	IV, 176
5 Abū Sinān Ḍirār b. Murra	Kufa	4	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>	II, 185
6 Bahz b. Asad	Basra	7	<i>thabi</i> ^b	I, 168
7 Dāwūd b. Abī Hind	Basra	4	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>	I, 353
8 Hammād b. Zayd	Basra	6	Imām	I, 295
9 Ibn Jurayj, ‘Abd al-Malik	Mecca	4	<i>mustathbat</i>	II, 381
10 Ismāʿīl b. Sālim al-Asadī	Baghdad		<i>thiqa thiqa</i>	I, 105
11 Kahmas b. al-Ḥasan	Basra	4	<i>thiqa thiqa</i> , Shaykh	III, 201
12 Mahdī b. Maymūn al-Azdī	Basra	5	<i>thiqa thiqa; thiqa</i> ^c	III, 405
13 Mālik b. Anas	Medina		<i>ḥāfiẓ, mustathbat</i>	III, 209
14 Marwān b. Muʿāwiya al-Fazārī	Baghdad		<i>ḥāfiẓ ḥāfiẓ, thiqa</i>	III, 338
15 al-Mughīra b. Miqṣam	Kufa	4	<i>dhakī, ḥāfiẓ</i>	III, 390
16 Mūsā b. ‘Ulayy	Egypt	4	<i>thiqa thiqa</i> , Shaykh	III, 414
17 Ṣadaqa b. Khālīd	Syria	5	<i>thiqa thiqa, ṣāliḥ</i>	II, 175
18 Saʿīd b. Abī Ṣadaqa	Basra	4	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>	II, 36
19 Shuʿba b. al-Ḥajjāj	Basra		<i>ḥāfiẓ-mutathabbīt</i>	II, 144
20 Sufyān b. Saʿīd al-Thawrī	Kufa		<i>ḥāfiẓ-mutathabbīt</i>	II, 54
21 Wakīʿ b. al-Jarrāḥ	Kufa	7	<i>ḥāfiẓ ḥāfiẓ</i>	IV, 83
22 Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān	Basra		Nobody like him ^d	IV, 114
23 Yazīd b. Zurayʿ	Basra	6	<i>rayḥānat al-Basra</i>	IV, 148
24 Zāʿida b. Qudāma	Kufa	6	<i>ḥāfiẓ-mutathabbīt</i>	I, 384
25 Zuhayr b. Muʿāwiya	Kufa	6	<i>ḥāfiẓ-mutathabbīt</i>	I, 396

^a All references are to *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*.

^b Ibn Ḥanbal reports that Ibn Mahdī considered only Bahz to be *thabi*; *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 168–9.

^c The second grade for Mahdī is from Shuʿba; *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 405. Recall from the second chapter that there was not any evidence of Shuʿba using the expression *thiqa thiqa*.

^d The exact quote of Ibn Ḥanbal is: *mā raʿaynā mithla Yahyā ibn Saʿīd fī ḥādthā l-shaʿn—yaʿnī fī l-ḥādth—huwa ṣāhibu ḥādthā l-shaʿn*; *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 114.

This analysis of the grades employed by Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal, as well as the identification of both their least and most favorite transmitters, sheds light on the first generation of Sunni *ḥadīth* critics for whom a significant body of opinions has survived. These three men contributed to the standardization of the technical vocabulary of the nascent discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism,

⁶⁸ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 394–5. Ibn ‘Ulayya also was considered by Ibn Ḥanbal to grasp jurisprudence better than Hushaym b. Bashīr; *ibid.*, I, 94–9.

⁶⁹ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 311–2. This is confirmed by our study of the *atrāf* of Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad* in the next chapter; see VIII.4, note 88.

⁷⁰ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 13–5. This quote may apply only to their respective transmissions from Shuʿba.

⁷¹ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 205–6.

⁷² *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 345.

⁷³ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 271.

⁷⁴ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 211. Ibn Ḥanbal states that the best pupils of al-Zuhrī who transmitted a large amount of material were Yūnus, ‘Uqayl, and Maʿmar, and that Maʿmar was the best of these three; *ibid.*, III, 210.

⁷⁵ Note that three of these four men were Kufans; this city appears to have housed both the best and worst transmitters of this period.

and established firmly the grades *thiqa*, *laysa bihi ba's*, *ṣāliḥ*, *da'if*, and *matrūk*. This being said, each of the three scholars displays fiercely independent approaches to his craft. Ibn Sa'd comes across as particularly positive, and applied a variety of expressions, such as *rafi'*, *'ālī*, *'ālim*, and *warī'*, which were idiosyncratic, and others, such as *ḥujja* and *thabt*, which were ultimately more popular with later critics than with his contemporaries. Ibn Ma'in's severity in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh* is manifest in his penchant for declaring a multitude of *ḥadīth*-transmitters to be entirely worthless, untrustworthy, or even liars, and his precision is evident in his preference for relative grades over absolute ones for many prominent *ḥadīth* scholars. Finally, Ibn Ḥanbal emerges as a moderate critic who applied motley positive expressions and relative grades to strong scholars, and who identified weak transmitters with both his own opinions as well as those of his predecessors. The importance of the standardization of the critical vocabulary of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism by Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, Ibn Ḥanbal and their contemporaries, lies not merely in the establishment of a set of tools that could distinguish weak *ḥadīth* from strong ones solely on the basis of *isnāds*; rather, it provided a vehicle by which individual scholars could express whom among their predecessors they considered to be trustworthy authorities of the prophetic teachings that lay at the very heart of the Sunnī articulation of Islam.

VII.5 *Reliable and unreliable transmitters in the eyes of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal: A comparative study*

One of the initial goals of this project was the deceptively simple task of constructing a database of the critical opinions of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal in order to ascertain whether they agreed or disagreed over the reliability of several hundred transmitters. This project originally envisioned a simple three-way comparison, but was stymied unexpectedly by the discovery that these three critics were interested in quite different pools of transmitters. Indeed, it came as a shock that a paltry 78 of Ibn Sa'd's 1105 evaluated men received grades from both Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh* and 'Abdullāh's *ʿItāl*, respectively. Although this endeavor was salvaged by the fact that Ibn Ma'in graded 203 of Ibn Sa'd's men (18.4%) and Ibn Ḥanbal graded 266 (24%) of them, it is necessary to explain

why only 7% of Ibn Sa'd's evaluated men in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* received grades from both Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal.

A closer look at the temporal and geographical distribution of Ibn Sa'd's 1105 evaluated transmitters is the first step towards understanding why the originally planned comparison was impossible. The following table provides an overview of these men:⁷⁶

Table 7.7: Ibn Sa'd's graded men in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*

City	Ṭ 1	Ṭ 2	Ṭ 3	Ṭ 4	Ṭ 5	Ṭ 6	Ṭ 7	Ṭ 8	Ṭ 9	Total	%
Kufa	78	25	19	43	27	31	43	15	3	284	25.7
Medina	57	55	24	58	53	18	10			275	24.9
Basra	20	57	28	46	29	34	23			237	21.4
Baghdad										64	5.8
Mecca	1	12	23	14	11					61	5.5
Syria	8	8	12	10	12	7				57	5.2
Jazīra										26	2.4
Egypt	5	4	5	6	4	1				25	2.3
Wāsiṭ										25	2.3
Khurāsān										23	2.1
'Awāṣim										8	.72
Ayla										6	.54
Rayy										6	.54
Madā'in										5	.45
Anbār										1	.09
Andalus										1	.09
Ifriqiyya										1	.09
Total										1105	100.1

This chart reveals Ibn Sa'd's deep interest in *ḥadīth*-transmitters who lived during the first three generations of Islamic history, as well as those who lived in the cities of Kufa, Medina, and Basra. In fact, one third (363 men) of Ibn Sa'd's graded men in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* were members of the first three *ṭabaqāt* of these three cities, and 247 of the Medinans who were graded (22.3% of the total sample) lived

⁷⁶ The letter Ṭ refers to *ṭabaqa*; only the transmitters from Kufa, Medina, Basra, Mecca, Syria, Egypt, and Yemen are arranged in this manner. Note that Ibn Sa'd does not provide any critical opinions for the small number of Yemenis found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

prior to the generation of Mālik b. Anas (*ṭabaqa* 6). Ibn Sa'd's overwhelming interest in first/seventh century transmitters in general, and the men of Medina in particular,⁷⁷ does not appear to have been shared by either Ibn Ma'in or Ibn Ḥanbal, both of whom devoted their energies to the generations immediately preceding themselves and to Iraqis.⁷⁸ This disparity, coupled with Ibn Ma'in's predilection for uncovering the very worst transmitters,⁷⁹ seems to account for the surprising lack of overlap between Ibn Sa'd and his two Baghdādī contemporaries.

The seventy-eight men who received grades from all three of the sample critics are a diverse lot of second/eighth century transmitters from Syria to Khurāsān. Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal agreed upon the reliability (or lack thereof) of all but sixteen of these men, and it is striking that Ibn Ḥanbal is always found in the majority opinion. The following table elucidates the sixteen cases over which consensus did *not* exist:

Table 7.8: Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal: No consensus⁸⁰

Name	City	Ṭ	Ibn Sa'd	Ibn Ma'in	Ibn Ḥanbal
1 'Abd al-Jabbār b. 'Abbās	Kufa	5	<i>fīhi ḍa'f</i>	LBB	LBB ^a
2 Abū Bakr al-Nahshalī	Kufa	6	Special ^b	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	<i>ṭhiqa</i>
3 Abū Janāb al-Kalbī	Kufa	5	<i>ḍa'if</i>	LBB	<i>yudallis</i> , <i>lahu manākīr</i> ^c
4 Bukayr b. 'Āmir	Kufa	5	<i>ṭhiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	<i>ḍa'if</i> , <i>tarakahu</i> ^d	LBDh in <i>ḥadīth</i> , LBQ

⁷⁷ Ibn Sa'd's thorough treatment of Medinan scholars was in no doubt due to the influence of his teacher al-Wāqidi, and it is not always clear whether the grade for a transmitter found in the Medinan *ṭabaqāt* is the opinion of Ibn Sa'd or his teacher. Note that al-Wāqidi played a minor role in the Kufan and Basran chapters; rather, natives of these cities, such as al-Faḍl b. Dukayn, Waki', and 'Affān b. Muslim, appear to have supplied Ibn Sa'd with much of his information about these transmitters.

⁷⁸ Note that only three of the 78 men whom all three scholars graded lived prior to the fourth *ṭabaqa*.

⁷⁹ This is actually the responsibility of al-Dūrī; a cursory glance at al-Dārimī's *Tārīkh* and Kawsaj's recension preserved in *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl* appear to contain a far higher percentage of Ibn Ma'in's positive grades than the former book.

⁸⁰ Abbreviations: LBS: *laysa bi-shay'*; LBB: *laysa bihi ba's*; LBDh: *laysa bi-dhāk*; LBQ: *laysa bi-qawī*; LBT: *laysa bi-ṭhiqa*; LHBS: *laysa ḥadīthuhu bi-shay'*.

Table 7.8 (cont.)

Name	City	Ṭ	Ibn Sa'd	Ibn Ma'in	Ibn Ḥanbal
5 al-Ḥārith al-A'war	Kufa	1	<i>ḍa'if</i>	LBB	<i>kadhḍāb</i> ^e
6 Makhrama b. Bukayr	Medina	5	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	<i>ḍa'if</i> , LBS	<i>ṭhiqa</i>
7 al-Mubārak b. Faḍāla	Basra	5	<i>fīhi ḍa'f</i>	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	<i>yudallis</i> , <i>ḍa'if</i>
8 al-Naḍr b. 'Arabī	Jazīra		<i>ḍa'if</i>	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	LBB, <i>ṭhiqa</i>
9 Qābūs b. Abī Ḥabīb	Kufa	4	<i>fīhi ḍa'f</i>	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	LBDh, <i>ḍa'if</i>
10 Sa'id b. Sinān	Rayy		<i>sayyī'</i> <i>l-khuluq</i>	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	LBQ
11 Salama b. Wardān	Medina	5	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	LBS	<i>munkar</i> , <i>ḍa'if</i>
12 Shahr b. Ḥawshab	Syria	2	<i>ḍa'if</i>	<i>ṭhiqa</i> , <i>ṭhiqa</i>	<i>tarakahu</i> , <i>ḍa'if</i>
13 'Umar b. 'Alī al-Muqaddamī	Basra	6	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	<i>lam aktub 'anhu shay'an</i>	<i>yudallis</i> , LBB
14 Usāma b. Zayd al-Laythī	Medina	5	<i>yustad'af</i>	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	<i>tarakahu</i> , <i>lahu manākīr</i>
15 Yazīd b. Abī Ziyād	Kufa	4	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	LBDh	LBDh
16 al-Zanjī, Muslim b. Khālīd	Mecca	5	Many errors ^g	<i>ṭhiqa</i> , <i>ṣāliḥ</i>	<i>kadhā wa kadhā</i>

^a Ibn Ḥanbal's precise grade is "I hope that he is not bad" *arjū an lā yakūna bihi ba's*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 308.

^b Ibn Sa'd's grade is "some people consider him to be weak" *minhum man yastad'ifuhu*; *ṬK* 2001, VIII, 499. He is also identified as a Murjī'i, 'ābid, and nāsik who had "some" *ḥadīth*.

^c Ibn Ḥanbal seems to want to have it both ways, as he also evaluated Abū Janāb as *ṭhiqa*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 112.

^d Ibn Ma'in reports that this was the opinion of Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth; Ibn Ma'in obtained this information from Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 231.

^e Ibn Ḥanbal attributed this opinion to al-Sha'bī; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 213-4.

^f Ibn Ḥanbal reports that this was the opinion of Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 77-8.

^g Ibn Sa'd's exact words are: *wa kāna kathīra l-ḥadīthi kathīra l-ghalaṭi wa l-khaṭa'i fī ḥadīthihī wa kāna fī badanhi nīmā l-rajulu wa lakinnahu kāna yaḡḥlaṭu*; *ṬK* 2001, VIII, 60-1.

Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal all agree upon the reliability (or lack thereof) of sixty-two men found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, and forty of these evaluations consist of positive grades. The following table presents this group of transmitters:

Table 7.9: Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Hanbal: Consensus⁸¹

	Name	City	T	Ibn Sa'd	Ibn Ma'in	Ibn Hanbal
1	Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh	Basra	4	<i>matrūk</i>	<i>matrūk</i>	<i>matrūk</i>
2	'Abbād b. Manṣūr	Basra	4	<i>da'if</i>	LBS, LBQ	Special ^a
3	'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abān	Kufa	8	Special ^b	LBS	<i>tarakahu</i>
4	'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Ja'far	Medina	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , LBB	<i>thiqa thiqa</i> , LBB
5	'Abd al-Rahmān b. Ishāq	Kufa	5	<i>da'if</i>	<i>da'if</i>	<i>matrūk</i> , <i>lahu manākīr</i> , LBDh
6	'Abd al-Rahmān b. Zayd b. Aslam	Medina	6	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	LHBS	<i>yudā'ifuhu</i>
7	'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Mujāhid	Mecca	4	<i>da'if</i>	<i>da'if</i>	LBS, <i>da'if</i>
8	'Abdullāh b. Sa'id	Medina	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , Shaykh
9	'Ā'idh b. Ḥabīb	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	LBB
10	'Alī b. Ghurāb	Kufa	7	<i>ṣadūq</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>ṣadūq</i>
11	'Alī b. Ḥashim b. al-Barīd	Kufa	7	<i>ṣadūq</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	LBB
12	'Amr b. Marzūq al-Bāhilī	Basra	4	<i>thiqa</i>	LBB	<i>ṣāhib khayr</i>
13	'Amr b. al-Muhājir	Syria	4	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>
14	'Amr b. 'Ubayd	Basra	4	LBS	LBS	<i>kadhaba</i> , <i>tarakahu</i>
15	Asad b. 'Amr al-Bajālī	Baghdad	na	<i>thiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , LBB	<i>ṣadūq</i>
16	Ash'ath b. Sawwār	Kufa	5	<i>da'if</i>	<i>da'if</i>	<i>da'if</i>
17	'Āsim b. 'Ubayd Allāh	Medina	4	<i>lā yuḥtajjū bihi</i>	<i>da'if</i> , <i>lā yuḥtajjū bihi</i>	<i>yattaqūn ḥadīthahu</i> ^c
18	al-Awzā'ī	'Awāṣim		<i>thiqa-ḥujja</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>
19	'Awf b. Abī Jamīla	Basra	4	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , <i>ṣāliḥ</i>
20	Dāwūd b. Abī Hind	Basra	4	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>
21	Fiṭr b. Khalifa	Kufa	5	<i>thiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , <i>ṣāliḥ</i> , <i>kayyis</i>
22	Ghālīb b. 'Ubayd Allāh	Jazīra		<i>da'if</i>	<i>da'if</i>	<i>taraktuhu</i> ^d

⁸¹ Abbreviations: LBS: *laysa bi-shay'*; LBB: *laysa bihi ba's*; LBDh: *laysa bi-dhāk*; LBQ: *laysa bi-qawī*; LBT: *laysa bi-thiqa*; LHBS: *laysa ḥadīthuhu bi-shay'*. References can be found in Appendix A of my doctoral dissertation "The Arts of *Ḥadīth* Compilation and Criticism: A Study of the Emergence of Sunni Islam in the third/ninth century" (University of Chicago, 2002).

Table 7.9 (cont.)

	Name	City	T	Ibn Sa'd	Ibn Ma'in	Ibn Hanbal
23	Ḥabīb b. Abī 'Amra al-Ḥimānī	Kufa	4	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , Shaykh
24	al-Ḥasan b. Dīnār	Basra	5	<i>da'if</i>	LBS	<i>taraka ḥadīthahu</i> ^e
25	Ishāq b. Yahyā	Medina	5	<i>yustad'af</i>	Ḍa'if, LBS	Shaykh, <i>matrūk</i>
26	Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī	Kufa	5	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	LBS, <i>kadhdhāb</i>	<i>tarakahu</i> ^f
27	Ja'far b. Burqān	Jazīra	na	<i>thiqa-ṣadūq</i>	<i>raḥul ṣidq</i>	LBB
28	Jarīr b. Ḥāzim	Basra	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>
29	Kahmas b. al-Ḥasan	Basra	4	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>
30	Khārīja b. Muṣ'ab	Khurāsān	na	<i>tarakahu</i>	LBS, LBT	Special ^g
31	Mahdī b. Maymūn	Basra	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>
32	Mālik b. Anas	Medina	6	<i>thiqa-ḥujja</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>ḥāfiẓ</i>
33	al-Mas'ūdī, 'Abd al-Rahmān ^h	Kufa	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>jayyid</i>
34	Mīndal b. 'Alī	Medina	6	<i>fih da'f</i>	<i>turika</i>	<i>da'if</i>
35	Muḥammad b. Abī Yahyā	Medina	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>
36	Muḥammad b. 'Ajlān	Medina	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , <i>muḍṭarib</i>
37	Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl	Khurāsān	na	<i>matrūk</i>	LBS, <i>da'if</i>	LBS
38	Muḥammad b. Ḥasan	Wāsiṭ	na	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	LBB
39	Muḥammad b. Sālim	Kufa	5	<i>da'if</i>	<i>da'if</i>	<i>matrūk</i>
40	Muḥammad b. Yazīd	Wāsiṭ	na	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	LBB
41	Mūsā b. 'Uqba	Medina	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>
42	Ṣadaqa b. Khālīd	Syria	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa thiqa</i>
43	Sa'id b. Muḥammad	Kufa	7	<i>da'if</i>	LBS	<i>da'fun</i> , <i>'indahu</i> ⁱ
44	Sa'id b. Zayd	Basra	6	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	LBB
45	Salama b. Ṣāliḥ al-Ju'fī	Kufa	6	<i>da'fahu l-nās</i>	LBS, LBT	LBS
46	Salm b. Sālim al-Balkhī	Khurāsān	na	<i>da'if</i>	LBS	LBDh
47	Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj	Basra	5	<i>thiqa-ḥujja</i>	<i>thiqa</i> ^j	<i>ḥāfiẓ</i>
48	Sufyān al-Thawrī	Kufa	6	<i>thiqa-ḥujja</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , Imām	<i>ḥāfiẓ</i>
49	Ṭalḥa b. 'Amr	Mecca	4	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	LBS, <i>da'if</i>	<i>matrūk</i> , <i>lā shay'</i>
50	Ṭalḥa b. Yahyā	Kufa	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>ṣāliḥ</i>
51	Thawr b. Yazīd	Syria	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>

Table 7.9 (cont.)

Name	City	Ṭ	Ibn Sa'd	Ibn Ma'in	Ibn Hanbal
52 'Ubayda b. Mu'atūb	Kufa	4	<i>da'if jiddan</i>	LBS	<i>fihi da'f, tarakahu</i> ^a
53 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. Zayd	Medina	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>ṣāliḥ</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , LBB, Shaykh
54 'Umar b. Qays Sandal	Mecca	3	<i>da'if</i>	<i>da'if</i>	<i>laysa yusāwī ḥadīthuhu shay'an</i>
55 Umayy b. Rabī'a	Kufa	5	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , Shaykh
56 'Uthmān al-Battī	Basra	4	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i> , LBB
57 'Uyayna b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān	Basra	4	<i>thiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	LBB	LBB, <i>ṣāliḥ</i>
58 Wuhayb b. Khālīd	Basra	6	<i>thiqa-ḥujja</i>	<i>thabt</i>	LBB
59 Yahyā b. Zakariyyā	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	<i>kayyis</i>	<i>thiqa</i>
60 Yazīd b. Ḥāzim	Basra	4	<i>thiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>thiqa</i>
61 Yazīd b. Yazīd	Syria	5	<i>thiqa-inshā'a llāh</i>	<i>thiqa</i>	<i>ṣāliḥ</i>
62 Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya	Kufa	6	<i>thiqa-thabt</i>	<i>thabt</i>	<i>ḥāfiẓ</i>

^a Ibn Hanbal reports that Mu'adh b. Mu'adh "did not like his transmission;" *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 221.

^b Ibn Sa'd reports that "he had much material from Sufyān [al-Thawrī] and then he got confused afterwards, and so the people abstained from his *ḥadīth*" *wa kāna kathīra l-rivāyati 'an Sufyān, thumma khallaṭa ba'da dhālika fa-amsakū 'an ḥadīthihī*; ṬK 2001, VIII, 528.

^c Ibn Hanbal obtained this opinion from Ibn 'Uyayna; *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 204-5.

^d Ibn Hanbal reports that this was the opinion of Wakī'; *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 141-2.

^e Ibn Hanbal obtained this opinion from Ibn Mubārak; *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 252-3.

^f Ibn Hanbal reports that this was the opinion of Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān, Ibn Maḥdī, and Sufyān al-Thawrī (at the end of his life); *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 185-7.

^g 'Abdullāh reports that his father forbade him to write any of Khārīja's *ḥadīth* (*nahānī an aktuba 'anhu shay'an*); *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 326-7.

^h Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal all mention that al-Mas'ūdī became confused (*yaghlaṭ/ikhtalaṭa*) at the end of his life; ṬK 2001, VIII, 486, al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 245 and *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 330-1.

ⁱ Ibn Hanbal attributed this grade to Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān; *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 46.

^j Ibn Ma'in attributed this grade to Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 164.

^k Ibn Hanbal reports that this was the opinion of Ibn Mubārak; *Mawsū'at al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 418.

This group of *ḥadīth*-transmitters, for whose quality there is consensus among Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Hanbal, is a mixture of familiar and new names. Nearly three-quarters of the men hail from Kufa (18 men), Basra (16), and Medina (12), while the remaining sixteen are natives of Syria (4), Khurāsān (3), Mecca (3), al-Jazīra (2), Wāsiṭ (2), Baghdād (1), and al-'Awāṣim (1). A particularly striking finding is that all three of the Khurāsānīs and all three of the Meccans are weak transmitters.⁸² More than half of the transmitters lived in the fourth and fifth *ṭabaqāt*, which corresponds roughly to the first half of the second/eighth century, and particular attention is received by the fifth *ṭabaqa* of Kufans.⁸³ Seven of Ibn Sa'd's least favorite transmitters received negative grades from both Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal,⁸⁴ while only five of his favorite ones received positive grades from both of these men.⁸⁵ In fact, the paucity of grades for Ibn Sa'd's favorite men from Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal supports my assertion that these latter two critics did not trouble themselves to affirm the reliability of master scholars like Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, al-Zuhrī, and Maṣṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir, and, instead, chose to devote their energies towards the elucidation of the best pupils of these illustrious men. In fact, Ibn Sa'd's practice of grading "obviously" reliable *ḥadīth*-transmitters among the *ṭābi'ūn* seems to have been idiosyncratic in his day and was declared irrelevant by Ibn Abī Ḥātim in his *Taqdima*.⁸⁶

⁸² The Khurāsānīs are Khārīja b. Muṣ'ab, Muḥammad b. Faḍl, and Salm b. Ṣālim al-Balkhī; the Meccans are 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. Mujāhid, Ṭalḥa b. 'Amr, and 'Umar b. Qays Sandal.

⁸³ Eight men of the fifth *ṭabaqa* of Kufans are found in this group, and only half of them were considered reliable.

⁸⁴ The seven men are the Kufans Jābir al-Ju'fī and 'Ubayda b. Mu'attib; the Basrans Abān b. Abī 'Ayyāsh and 'Amr b. 'Ubayd (a founder of the Mu'tazila); the Medinan 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd; the Meccan Ṭalḥa b. 'Amr; and the Khurāsānī Muḥammad b. Faḍl.

⁸⁵ These five men are al-Awzā'i, Mālik, Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya.

⁸⁶ Ibn Abī Ḥātim states explicitly that it is unnecessary for *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics to evaluate the *ṭābi'ūn*, although he does acknowledge that mention will be made of those who engaged in *taḍlīs* in the appropriate places in *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl* (*fa-lam yakun li-ishtighālīnā bi-l-tamyīzi baynahum . . . lā najidu minhum illā imāman mubarrizan muqaddaman fi l-faḍli wa l-'ilmi . . . illā mā kāna mimman alḥaqa nafsahu bi-him wa dal-lasahā baynahum mimman laysa yalḥaquhum . . .*); *Taqdima*, 9.

It is possible to acquire a far larger body of comparative grades than the above sample if the analysis is limited to just two of these three critics at a time. I mentioned earlier that Ibn Maʿīn graded 203 of Ibn Saʿd's 1105 evaluated men, and it is striking that there is agreement between the two critics in 177 cases (87%) and disagreement in only 26 of them (13%). The following table depicts the geographical and generational distribution of the men upon whom Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Maʿīn were in harmony over their absolute reliability or lack thereof.⁸⁷

Table 7.10: Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Maʿīn: Similar grades

City	Ṭ 1	Ṭ 2	Ṭ 3	Ṭ 4	Ṭ 5	Ṭ 6	Ṭ 7	Ṭ 8	Total
Kufa	1		1	5	11	15	12	4	49
Medina	1	4	1	7	19	10	4		47
Basra			2	14	10	5	1		32
Mecca			4	4	2				10
Khurāsān									10
Syria									7
Baghdad									6
Jazīra									4
Wāsiṭ									4
Egypt									3
Rayy		1							2
Madāʾīn									2
ʿAwāṣim									1
Total									177

Once again, there are few surprises to be found in this data. The majority of graded-men are found in the three primary cities of *ḥadīth* scholarship, Kufa, Medina, and Basra, and in the fourth to seventh *ṭabaqāt*. Two-thirds of these men (117) are considered reliable, and in four cases Ibn Maʿīn actually evaluates a transmitter with a higher grade than Ibn Saʿd.⁸⁸ Several prominent scholars are found among

⁸⁷ For details and references, see Lucas, "The Arts of *Ḥadīth* Compilation and Criticism: A Study of the Emergence of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century," Appendix B.

⁸⁸ The following men are evaluated as *ṣaḍūq* by Ibn Saʿd and *thiqa* by Ibn Maʿīn:

the sixty men whom both Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Maʿīn declared to be weak, including Abū Maʿshar of *ṣīra* fame,⁸⁹ the Egyptian *ḥadīth*-transmitter Ibn Lahīʿa (d. 174/790),⁹⁰ the Qurānic exegete Muqātil b. Sulaymān,⁹¹ and the *akhhbārī* Muḥammad b. al-Sāʾib al-Kalbī.⁹² Six of the men evaluated by Ibn Saʿd as *ḍaʿīf jiddan* were also given harsh grades by Ibn Maʿīn,⁹³ and five of Ibn Maʿīn's group of liars (*kadhhdhāb*) received negative marks from Ibn Saʿd.⁹⁴ While a significant percentage of these weak transmitters are Kufans (30%), it is important to observe that Medinans (25%), Basrans (17%) and Khurāsānīs (10%) constitute over half of these unreliable men, and that over a quarter of the *reliable* transmitters are Kufans as well.⁹⁵

A comparison between the grades of Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Ḥanbal yields a net sample of 266 *ḥadīth*-transmitters. Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Ḥanbal agreed over the quality of 227 of these men (85%) and disagreed over only 39 of them (15%). The following table displays the geographical and generational locations of the 227 transmitters for whom their exists a qualitative consensus between Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Ḥanbal.⁹⁶

Abū Isrāʾīl Ismāʿīl b. Abī Ishāq al-Mulāʾī, the famous Qurʾān reciter Ḥamza b. ʿUmāra al-Zayyāt, ʿAlī b. Ghurāb al-Fazārī, and ʿAlī b. Ḥāshim; TK 2001, VIII, 501, 507, 513. All four of these men are Kufans of the sixth and seventh *ṭabaqāt*.

⁸⁹ See TK 2001, VII, 597 and al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 118. Note that two other composers of biographies of the Prophet, Ibn Ishāq and Mūsā b. ʿUqba, were considered by both Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Maʿīn to be reliable, although Ibn Maʿīn declared that Ibn Ishāq was 'not strong' and a Qadārī in a second report in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*; *ibid.*, I, 181.

⁹⁰ TK 2001, IX, 524 and al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 369. Ibn Saʿd remarks that the Egyptians did not consider Ibn Lahīʿa to be weak.

⁹¹ TK 2001, IX, 377 and al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 287.

⁹² TK 2001, VIII, 478–9 and al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 206.

⁹³ Three of these men, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd, Talḥa b. ʿAmr, and ʿUbayda b. Muʿattib, were also evaluated as weak by Ibn Ḥanbal; the remaining three are the Kufans ʿAmr b. Shīmr al-Juʿfī, Muḥammad al-Kalbī, and Yahyā b. Salama.

⁹⁴ These five men are ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm b. Maṣṣūr of Wāsiṭ, Abū Jābir al-Bayyāḍī of Medina, the *qāḍī* Abū l-Bakhtarī of Baghdad, our Kufan friend Jābir al-Juʿfī, and Yūsuf b. Khālid of Basra. Note that Yūsuf is one of the few men whom Ibn Maʿīn declared to be a heretic (*zindīq*); al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 107.

⁹⁵ 26% of the reliable men are Kufans; 19% are Basrans, and 27% are Medinans.

⁹⁶ For details and references, see Lucas, "The Arts of *Ḥadīth* Compilation and Criticism: A Study of the Emergence of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century," Appendix C.

Table 7.11: Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal: Similar evaluations

City	Ṭ 1	Ṭ 2	Ṭ 3	Ṭ 4	Ṭ 5	Ṭ 6	Ṭ 7	Ṭ 8	Total
Kufa	2	2	2	18	11	8	12	2	57
Basra		1	8	21	12	7	5		54
Medina	1	1	2	14	19	5	1		43
Mecca		1	6	9	1				17
Baghdad									16
Syria		1	2	1	5	1			10
Wāsiṭ									9
Egypt			2	4	1				7
Jazīra									6
Khurāsān									3
Ayla									2
ʿAwāsim									2
Rayy									1
Total									227

This table indicates that although Ibn Ḥanbal was more interested in first/seventh century *ḥadīth*-transmitters than Ibn Maʿīn, he remained concerned primarily with transmitters of the second/eighth century.⁹⁷ Three quarters of these men were held in high esteem by both Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal, and it is noteworthy that all but one of the twenty-five men I identified as Ibn Ḥanbal's favorite transmitters received a minimal grade of *thiqa* from Ibn Sa'd.⁹⁸ Twenty-five men whom Ibn Sa'd evaluated with the grades *thiqa-ḥujja* or *thiqa-thabt*, including Abū l-Walīd al-Ṭayālīsī, Maṣṣūr b. Zādhān, ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿUmar b. Ḥafṣ, and Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṣārī, received positive grades from Ibn Ḥanbal, although occasionally of a less enthusiastic pitch than those articulated by Ibn Sa'd.⁹⁹ Several of the prominent transmitters whom both Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal evaluated as weak

are the Medinan ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUmar b. Ḥafṣ,¹⁰⁰ the Kufan *tābiʿī* al-Ḥārith al-Aʿwar,¹⁰¹ the pupil of al-Zuhri, Yūnus b. Yazīd al-Aylī,¹⁰² and the Meccan Muslim b. Khālid al-Zanjī.¹⁰³ Kufans are prominent, once again, among both the reliable (23%) as well as the unreliable transmitters (31%) for whom Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal were in agreement, although Basra surpassed Kufa with 25% of the reliable men and only 20% of the unreliable ones.

This study demonstrates the high degree of consensus between three contemporary *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics of the first half of the third/ninth century. Despite my initial disappointment over the embarrassingly small number of men who received grades in all three of the sources that I analyzed, it was possible to cull a more substantial sample of 203 and 266 transmitters by restricting the comparison to Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal, respectively. I found a consistently high degree of consensus in all three of the comparisons between the opinions of these critics, and it is unlikely that my findings would change significantly were I to include additional reports from other sources. I have argued that this consensus had a deep impact on the articulation of Sunnī Islam because it drew a border between those first and second century men whose transmissions were acceptable to Sunnī *ḥadīth* compilers and those who were not, thus limiting the massive corpus of prophetic teachings that could find its way into the canonical works of Sunnī Islam. While the *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics appear to have designated hundreds, if not thousands, of their predecessors in the camp of reliable men, a significant body of men was deemed unreliable by the critics of the generation immediately preceding the compilation of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how these two quintessential Sunnī books could have been compiled had it not been for the willingness of scholars such as Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibn Ḥanbal to pursue and expand rigorously the discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism to a level that far outstripped the efforts of their teachers.

⁹⁷ Note that 32 of the men (14%) whom Ibn Ḥanbal evaluated lived prior to the fourth *ṭabaqa*, whereas Ibn Ma'īn graded only 14 men (8%) during this time.

⁹⁸ The one exception, the Egyptian Mūsā b. ʿUlayy, was graded *thiqa-in shā'a llāh* by Ibn Sa'd and *thiqa thiqa*, Shaykh by Ibn Ḥanbal; ṬK 2001, IX, 552 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 414.

⁹⁹ Note, for example, that Ibn Ḥanbal declared that Abū l-Walīd was not *thabt*, but rather *mutqin* only in what he transmitted from Shu'ba; *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 41-2. Another example is Wuhayb b. Khālid, who was graded *thiqa-ḥujja* by Ibn Sa'd but a mere LBB by Ibn Ḥanbal; ṬK 2001, IX, 288 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 103.

¹⁰⁰ ṬK 2001, VII, 532 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 268-9.

¹⁰¹ ṬK 2001, VIII, 288-9 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 213-4.

¹⁰² ṬK 2001, IX, 529 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 180-2.

¹⁰³ ṬK 2001, VIII, 60-1 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 347-8.

VII.6 *Sectarian labels: Do they matter?*

Did sectarian labels play a significant role in the discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism? Were Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal more inclined to grade first and second century advocates of the Qadariyya or Murji'a positions on human agency and the nature of faith as trustworthy, given that these positions were found to be repugnant by many of their contemporaries? Or were these labels unrelated to an individual's skill in *ḥadīth*-transmission? The following discussion demonstrates the lack of relationship between quality transmission and sectarian affiliation in the cases of the adherents of the Qadariyya, Murji'a, and *tashayyū'* found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, and closes with a brief discussion of the terms *ṣāḥib ḥadīth* and *ṣāḥib sunna*.¹⁰⁴

Slightly over twenty transmitters found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* are identified as adherents to Qadar, a belief associated with the championing of human freedom and responsibility for one's bad acts.¹⁰⁵ This position is associated often with a famous epistle attributed to al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,¹⁰⁶ although none of our three critics suggests that al-Ḥasan was related to the Qadariyya. Basrans of later generations do make a strong showing in this group, including the master *ḥadīth*-transmitters Qatāda b. Di'āma and Hishām al-Dastawā'i,¹⁰⁷ as well

¹⁰⁴ Note that five 'Uthmānīs, three Khawārij, and the Mu'tazilī 'Amr b. 'Ubayd are found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* as well. All five of the 'Uthmānīs—'Abdullāh b. Shaqīq al-'Uqaylī, Ibn 'Awn, Ḥammād b. Zayd, Yazīd b. Zuray', Bishr b. al-Mufaddal—were excellent *ḥadīth* scholars and hailed from Basra; TK 2001, IX, 125, 261, 287, 290, 291. Two of the Khawārij (Ṣadaqa b. Mūsā and Jābir b. Zayd Abū l-Sha'thā) were considered reliable. The unreliable Khārījī was the famous Berber pupil of Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrima; while Ibn Sa'd evaluated him as 'not an authority' (*ibid.*, VII, 282), al-Bukhārī did include material from him in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Note also that the three Qadarīs, two Murji'īs, two Shi'īs, one Khārījī and one 'Uthmānī found only in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh* do not appear to affect my findings concerning the lack of relationship between sound transmitters and their sectarian affiliations; the fact that the three Jahmīs and three Rāfiḍīs were detested by Ibn Ma'in, while appearing to contradict my thesis, merely shows that the tolerance of the Sunnī *ḥadīth* critics of the third/ninth century extended to all but the most extreme Islamic beliefs in circulation.

¹⁰⁵ Al-Dhahabī cites Qatāda's purported definition of Qadar as "everything is by the power of God except acts of disobedience" (*kullu shay'in bi-qadari lāhi illā l-ma'āsī*); *Tadhkira*, I, 93.

¹⁰⁶ See van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, II, 41–50.

¹⁰⁷ TK 2001, IX, 228, 279. Other reliable Basran Qadarīs include 'Aṭā' b. Abī Maymūn, 'Awf b. Abī Jamīla, and Ḥusayn b. Dhakwān al-Mu'allim; *ibid.*, IX, 244, 257, 270. Note that Ibn Ma'in identified 'Awf and Ḥusayn as Qadarīs, while Ibn Sa'd did not; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 148, 208.

as the unreliable Yazīd b. Abān al-Raqāshī, 'Abbād b. Manṣūr, 'Abd al-A'lā al-Qurashī, and 'Abbād b. Ṣuhayb.¹⁰⁸ The famous Qur'ānic exegete Ibn Abī Najīh, along with his companions Sayf b. Sulaymān and Zakariyā b. Ishāq, formed a Qadarī enclave of reliable *ḥadīth*-transmitters in Mecca,¹⁰⁹ while only one of the five Medinan Qadarīs appears to have been an unreliable transmitter.¹¹⁰ Two of the Syrian Qadarīs were also reliable transmitters,¹¹¹ although Ibn Sa'd grades both Makḥūl al-Shāmī and al-Waḍīn b. 'Aṭā' as *da'if*.¹¹² Far from being stigmatized, the majority of *ḥadīth*-transmitters associated with the Qadarī position were held by Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal in high esteem.

The seventeen Murji'a found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* are the most geographically diverse lot of the three sectarian groups under investigation.¹¹³ The Kufan Murji'a range from the major *ḥadīth* scholars Miṣ'ar b. Kidām and Abū Mu'āwiya al-Ḍarīr, to the famous, albeit unreliable, jurist Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān.¹¹⁴ Two of the three

¹⁰⁸ TK 2001, IX, 244, 269, 291, 298. Ibn Ḥanbal identified 'Abbād b. Manṣūr and Abd al-A'lā as a Qadarīs, while Ibn Sa'd did not; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 221, 306.

¹⁰⁹ TK 2001, VIII, 44, 55.

¹¹⁰ The weak transmitter is Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Aslamī; TK 2001, VII, 603; and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 38. The reliable Qadarīs are 'Abdullāh b. Abī Labīd, 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Ja'far, Ibn Ishāq, and Ibn Abī Dhī'b (Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān); TK 2001, VII, 514, 552, 558. Ibn Ma'in called 'Abd al-Ḥamīd and Ibn Ishāq Qadarīs, but Ibn Sa'd did not; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 157, 181.

¹¹¹ TK 2001, IX, 456, 470. Thawr b. Yazīd al-Kalā'i and the Damascene qāḍī Yahyā b. Ḥamza; TK 2001, IX 471, 473. Only Ibn Ma'in identified Yahyā as a Qadarī; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 341. The latter was not given a traditional grade by Ibn Sa'd or in the *ʿIlal*, although Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion in Ibn Abī Ḥatīm's *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl* is *laysa bihi ba's*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 112.

¹¹² Note that Ibn Ḥanbal graded al-Waḍīn as "not bad" and *thiqā*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 81. Another Syrian Qadarī, Sa'id b. Bashīr al-Azdī, lacks a formal grade in our three primary sources but is evaluated by Ibn Ḥanbal as *laysa bi-shay'* in the recension of Ibn Hānī; *ibid.*, II, 27.

¹¹³ Thirteen of these men were identified by Ibn Sa'd as Murji'a; Ibn Ḥanbal identified an additional four men who received grades from Ibn Sa'd, but whom the latter did not designate with this label. Note that Ibn Sa'd distinguished al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyya as the originator of the initial position of *ijā'*, namely that the first two Caliphs were excellent but that one should avoid judgment upon the merits of 'Uthmān and 'Alī; TK 2001, VII, 322.

¹¹⁴ TK 2001, VIII, 484, 515, and 451, respectively. Three additional reliable Kufan Murji'a include Qays b. Muslim al-Jadalī, Mūsā b. Abī Kathīr, and 'Umar b. Dharr; TK 2001, VIII, 434, 458, 482. A fourth Murji'i, Abū Bakr al-Nahshalī, was evaluated as *thiqā* by Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal, but Ibn Sa'd merely remarks that "some folk declare him weak;" TK 2001, VIII, 499; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 246; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 197.

Khurāsānī Murjī'a were clearly unreliable,¹¹⁵ and a father-son pair of Meccan Murjī'a receive lackluster grades.¹¹⁶ The remaining Murjī'a were isolated individuals in five Iraqi cities, and only Abū Khālīd al-Dālānī of Wāsiṭ was considered an unreliable transmitter among them.¹¹⁷ As with the previous case, the Sunnī *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics of the third/ninth century clearly did not consider a scholar's affinity for Murjī'i beliefs as a barrier for inclusion among the trustworthy disseminators of prophetic material.

The general acceptance by Sunnī scholars of adherents to *tashayyū'*, the belief that 'Alī was superior to 'Uthmān but inferior to Abū Bakr and 'Umar, as reliable *ḥadīth*-transmitters is manifest in the opinions of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal.¹¹⁸ Only a third of the eighteen members of this group were graded as weak by one or more of our critics. Two of these men, Abū 'Abdullāh al-Jadalī and 'Alī b. Qādīm, were reported to have practiced "severe" (*shadīd*) *tashayyū'*,¹¹⁹ while 'Amr b. Abī l-Miqdam al-'Ijlī and Khālīd b. Makhlad were described as possessing "excessive" (*mufrit*) *tashayyū'*.¹²⁰ Both Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in declare Fiṭr b. Khalīfa, Ḥasan b. Ḥayy, Abū Ghassān Mālik b. Ismā'il, 'Awf b. Abī Jamīla, Ja'far b. Sulaymān, and 'Abbād b. al-'Awwām, to be trustworthy, despite their affinities for *tashayyū'*.¹²¹ Six additional advocates of *tashayyū'* were awarded pos-

itive grades by Ibn Sa'd, and it is interesting that three of them were found among the first *ṭabaqa* of *tābi'ūn*: 'Abdullāh b. Shaddād b. Usāma of Medina, 'Abdullāh b. Shaddād b. al-Hādī of Kufa, and Abū l-Aswad al-Du'alī of Basra.¹²² While the numbers of adherents to *tashayyū'* has been inflated slightly due to Ibn Sa'd's inclusion of five first-generation pro-'Alī *tābi'ūn* in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, the pattern of independence between sectarian affiliation and reliable *ḥadīth* transmission is affirmed by the group that most closely approached the position of the Zaydiyya and Imāmiyya with regard to the merits of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

The final sectarian labels of interest to this project are the intriguing *ṣāhib ḥadīth* and *ṣāhib sunna*. As with the three previous labels, none of our three critics provides any indication as to the exact meaning of these two expressions.¹²³ Thirty-nine men found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* receive one of these designations from either Ibn Sa'd or Ibn Ḥanbal in the *ʿIlal*, and virtually all of them lived in Baghdad, Kufa, and Basra.¹²⁴ Ibrāhīm b. Abī l-Layth of Baghdad and Mīndal b. 'Alī of Kufa stand out as the only two *aṣḥāb ḥadīth* who received negative qualitative grades in this entire lot.¹²⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal identifies explicitly the three *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* of Baghdad in

¹²² ṬK 2001, VII, 64; VIII, 264; IX, 98. Note that Ibn Ḥanbal reports that the Kufan 'Abdullāh b. Shaddād did not transmit anything from the Prophet; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 255. The three remaining adherents of *tashayyū'* are Yahyā b. al-Jazzār, Sālim b. Abī Ḥafṣa, and 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mūsā; ṬK 2001, VIII, 411, 454, 522.

¹²³ Al-Khallāl claims to quote Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion that *ṣāhib sunna* refers to someone who says "Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān," which is the correct position, and then adds the name 'Alī; al-Khallāl, *al-Sunna*, I, 408. Juynboll is of the opinion that these two terms were not interchangeable, since a *ṣāhib al-sunna* could be a weak *ḥadīth*-transmitter and a *ṣāhib al-ḥadīth* could be an adherent to multiple religious innovations (*bida'*); Juynboll, "Sunna," *EI2*, XI, 880. While this position is not contradicted by my findings, what is perhaps of greater interest is the extraordinary infrequency with which Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal employed these two terms in their works.

¹²⁴ The only non-Iraqis are al-Naḍr b. Shumayl of Khurāsān, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Fazārī of al-'Awāsim, and Ja'far b. Rabī'a of Egypt; ṬK 2001, IX, 377, 494, 520. Note that none of these men hail from the Hijāz.

¹²⁵ Ibn Sa'd grades Ibrāhīm as *yudā'af* and Mīndal as *fihī dā'if*; ṬK 2001, IX, 364; VIII, 502. Note that the latter is identified as being among *ahl al-sunna* instead of *ṣāhib sunna* by Ibn Sa'd. Ibn Ma'in states that Mīndal was rejected due to his habit of *ḥadīth* fabrication, and Ibn Ḥanbal declares him to be *dā'if*; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 325; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 396. The only other man who is identified as being from *ahl al-sunna* is the Baghdādī Mardawayh al-Ṣā'igh ('Abd al-Ṣamad b. Yazīd); ṬK 2001, IX, 367.

¹¹⁵ Both Abū Muṭ' al-Hakam b. 'Abdullāh al-Balkhī and Salm b. Sālim al-Balkhī were considered unreliable by Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in in the first case, and all three critics in the latter; ṬK 2001, IX, 377, 378; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 273-4; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 74. The third Khurāsānī Murjī'i, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Sulaymān al-Zayyāt, is mentioned only by Ibn Sa'd, who did not give him a qualitative grade; ṬK 2001, IX, 383.

¹¹⁶ 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Abī Rawwād was "known for his piety" according to Ibn Sa'd, while his son, 'Abd al-Majīd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, was considered *dā'if* by Ibn Sa'd and *thiqa* by Ibn Ma'in; ṬK 2001, VIII, 55, 62; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 51.

¹¹⁷ Ibn Sa'd graded Ṭalq b. Ḥabīb (Basra) as *thiqa in shā'a llāh*; Shabāba b. Sawwār (al-Madā'in) as *thiqa, ṣāliḥ*; al-Mu'allā b. Mansūr al-Rāzī (Baghdad) as *ṣadūq*; and Sālim b. 'Ajlan (Jazīra) as *thiqa*; ṬK 2001, IX, 226, 322, 344, 486.

¹¹⁸ This finding is corroborated by the case of 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī, a major teacher of Ibn Ḥanbal, who was accused of *tashayyū'*; see Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 67-8.

¹¹⁹ ṬK 2001, VIII, 347, 528.

¹²⁰ ṬK 2001, VIII, 505, 530. The remaining two weak adherents to *tashayyū'* are Hānī' b. Hānī' al-Hamdānī and Aṣbagh b. al-Nubāta; ṬK 2001, VIII, 342, 345. Note that all six of these men are Kufans, and that Abū 'Abdullāh and Hānī' were both first *ṭabaqa tābi'ūn*.

¹²¹ ṬK 2001, VIII, 484, 496, 528; IX, 257, 289, 332; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 246 (Fiṭr), 247 (Ḥasan), 248 ('Awf); II, 13 (Abū Ghassān), 104 (Ja'far), 164 ('Abbād).

his day as Abū Kāmil Muẓaffar b. Mudrik, Abū Salama Maṣṣūr b. Salama, and al-Haytham b. Jamīl,¹²⁶ and also applies this label to Jaʿfar b. Rabīʿa of Egypt and the Basran Wuhayb b. Khālīd.¹²⁷ Ibn Saʿd recognizes only Zāʿida b. Qudāma, Suʿayr b. al-Khims, ʿAbdullāh b. Idrīs, Abū Usāma Ḥammād b. Usāma, Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd al-Ṭanāfīsī, and Aḥmad b. ʿAbdullāh b. Yūnus, all of whom were Kufans of the sixth and seventh *ṭabaqāt*, as *ṣāhib sunna wa jamāʿa*, the full title of the *firqa* that is normally abbreviated as Sunnism.¹²⁸ In fact, the only Kufans and Basrans who lived in earlier *ṭabaqāt* than this group were ʿAlqama b. Qays, al-Mughīra b. Miqṣam al-Ḍabbī, Jarīr b. Ḥāzim, and the master critic Shuʿba.¹²⁹ The preponderance of sixth through eighth *ṭabaqāt* Kufans and Basrans who are identified as *ṣāhib sunna*, along with their dozen or so Baghdādī contemporaries, suggests strongly the Iraqī provenance of this term that was applied initially to *ḥadīth* scholars who flourished during the second half of the second/eighth century.

Table 7.12: An overview of transmitters identified as *ṣāhib sunna*

	Name	City	Ṭ	Ibn Saʿd	Ibn Maʿīn	Ibn Ḥanbal
1	ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. ʿAbd al-Malik	Kufa	7	<i>khayyir</i>		
2	ʿAbdullāh b. Idrīs b. Yazīd	Kufa	7	<i>ṭhiqa-ḥujja</i>		
3	Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī	ʿAwāṣim	na	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
4	Abū l-Qāsim <i>zawj bint</i> Abī Muslim	Baghdad	na	<i>ṭhiqa</i> ^a		
5	Abū Maʿmar, Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm	Baghdad	na	<i>ṭhiqa-thabī</i>		
6	Abū Usāma Ḥammād b. Usāma	Kufa	7	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
7	Aḥmad b. ʿAbdullāh b. Yūnus	Kufa	8	<i>ṭhiqa-ṣadūq</i>		
8	ʿAlqama b. Qays	Kufa	1	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		

¹²⁶ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 375, 399; IV, 72.

¹²⁷ *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 198; IV, 103. Ibn Ḥanbal also called al-Faḍl b. ʿAnbasa of Wāṣit a *ṣāhib al-ḥadīth*; *ibid.*, III, 155.

¹²⁸ *TK* 2001, VIII, 499, 508, 511, 517, 520, 529.

¹²⁹ *TK* 2001, VIII, 207, 456; IX, 278, 280. ʿAlqama was a first *ṭabaqa* Kufan and was identified as *ṣāhib sunna* only by Ibn Ḥanbal; *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 29. Al-Mughīra was a fourth *ṭabaqa* Kufan; Jarīr and Shuʿba were fifth *ṭabaqa* Basrans.

Table 7.12 (cont.)

	Name	City	Ṭ	Ibn Saʿd	Ibn Maʿīn	Ibn Ḥanbal
9	al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Minhal	Basra	7	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		LBB
10	Ḥamza b. ʿUmāra al-Zayyāt	Kufa	6	<i>ṣadūq</i>		
11	Ibrāhīm b. Abī l-Layth	Baghdad	na	<i>yudāʿaf</i>		
12	Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm al-Turjūmānī	Baghdad	na			LBB ^b
13	Jarīr b. Ḥāzim	Basra	5	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
14	Maṣṣūr b. Bashīr	Baghdad	na	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
15	Mardawayh al-Ṣāʿigh	Baghdad	na	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
16	Mīndal b. ʿAlī	Kufa	6	<i>fihī ḍaʿf</i>	<i>turika</i>	<i>ḍaʿif</i>
17	al-Muʿāfa b. ʿImrān	Jazīra	na	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
18	al-Mughīra b. Miqṣam al-Ḍabbī	Kufa	4	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
19	Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd al-Ṭanāfīsī	Kufa	7	<i>ṭhiqa</i>	<i>khayyir</i>	
20	Suʿayr b. al-Khims	Kufa	7	<i>sharīf</i>		
21	Wahb b. Jarīr b. Ḥāzim	Basra	7	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		
22	Zāʿida b. Qudāma	Kufa	6	<i>ṭhiqa</i>		<i>ḥāfiẓ</i>

^a Ibn Saʿd says *yaqūlu bi-sunna* instead of *ṣāhib sunna*.

^b Ibn Ḥanbal actually quoted Ibn Maʿīn's position in this case; *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 93.

VII.7 Conclusions

The story of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, whose prepubescent stage was analyzed in the fourth chapter, has now reached its adulthood. The generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal systematized this discipline, begun by Shuʿba, Mālik, and Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān, and applied it to an unprecedented number of men. The analysis of the grades used by these three scholars has uncovered several examples of individual terminology and personal styles of criticism. While the grades *ṭhiqa* and *ḍaʿif* enjoyed the widest currency, over a dozen terms were used by these three men to indicate different shades of reliability and delinquency with regard to *ḥadīth* transmission. It also became apparent, to my surprise, that Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal were interested in grading very different pools of men, and, as a consequence, their personal tastes limited the scope of the comparative qualitative analysis between these three critics. I salvaged my analysis through the adoption of bilateral, rather than

trilateral, comparisons between these critics, and it uncovered more than an 85% consensus between Ibn Ma'īn and Ibn Sa'd, and between Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Sa'd. It is this consensus as to the identities of the most authoritative *ḥadīth*-transmitters of the first two centuries of Islam that must be considered as a fundamental pillar in the articulation of Sunnī Islam by the critical *ḥadīth* compilers of the third/ninth century.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SUNNĪ HISTORICAL VISION OF THE FIRST
TWO CENTURIES OF *HADĪTH* TRANSMISSION

VIII.1

Behind all the myriad grades and details found in the works of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibn Ḥanbal there exists a common historical vision of the first two centuries of *ḥadīth* transmission that is at the core of the Sunnī articulation of Islam. The task of this last chapter is to construct a coherent narrative that does justice to this key third/ninth century historiographical dimension of Sunnism that tends to be overlooked in the secondary literature. This narrative focuses on the primary actors of *ḥadīth* transmission and articulates the untold story of the fall of Medina as the undisputed capital of *ḥadīth* and the rise of Kufa and Basra during the second/eighth century. This implicit historical vision of *ḥadīth* transmission, coupled with the belief in the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba* and the original discipline of *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, are, in my opinion, the foundations upon which Sunnī Islam was constructed by the *ḥadīth* scholars of the third/ninth century.

The following narrative is based almost exclusively upon the works of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'īn, and Ibn Ḥanbal, or their pupils. The first source is Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, or to be more precise, Ibn Ḥajar's study of this work that has been published as *Aṭrāf musnad al-Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal*. This book has already played a key role in the identification of the most prolific *ṣaḥāba* with regard to *ḥadīth* in the sixth chapter, and has been reemployed here to uncover their most significant *tābi'ī* pupils. The recensions of both al-Dūrī and al-Dārimī of Ibn Ma'īn's opinions contain much useful information about individual prominent transmitters, and the latter book is particularly helpful in that it opens with eleven scholars whose companions (*aṣḥāb*) all are evaluated comparatively in the same location.¹ Finally, Ibn

¹ These eleven men are al-Zuhrī, Qatāda, al-A'mash, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, 'Amr b. Dīnār, al-Sha'bī, Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī, Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī, Manṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Shu'ba; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 41-65.

Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is of fundamental significance for this narrative because of its extensive notes on individual transmitters, especially in the Hijāz, and Ibn Sa'd's unique habit of providing *quantitative* grades in over six hundred cases. While these grades are the ambiguous expressions 'many *ḥadīth*', 'some *ḥadīth*', and 'few *ḥadīth*',² they do indicate the massive scope of *ḥadīth* transmission during the first two post-prophetic centuries of Islam, and provide vivid proof of the crash of Medinan *ḥadīth* transmission during the early 'Abbāsīd period.

It is necessary to expand upon the theme of the magnitude of *ḥadīth* transmission prior to the succinct narrative of the major actors involved in this venture. Ibn Sa'd distinguishes 299 transmitters of 'many' *ḥadīth*, 155 of 'some', and 228 of 'a few' in the generations following the *ṣaḥāba*.³ When we consider that several hundred additional men are reported to have transmitted an unspecified quantity of prophetic material, it becomes clear that at least a thousand people subsequent to the *ṣaḥāba* were involved in this project prior to the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal. If each of the forty-seven transmitters of 'many *ḥadīth*' found in Medina, Mecca, Kufa, and Basra of the generation preceding Ibn Sa'd, had at his disposal, as a conservative estimate, five hundred *ḥadīth*,⁴ there would have been 23,500 *ḥadīth* in circulation solely in these four cities. Although I shall endeavor to identify the most prominent scholars in each of the five periods of my narrative of *ḥadīth* transmission, it is clear that a thorough description of this vast expression of Islamic piety transcends the scope of this chapter.

My emphasis upon prolific *ḥadīth*-transmitters is supplemented by qualitative remarks about these men throughout this narrative. The reason for the inclusion of this information is threefold. First, I seek to demonstrate the high correlation between prominent *ḥadīth* scholars and reliable scholars, in the eyes of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, something that is unacknowledged by scholars, such as

² These are *kathīr al-ḥadīth*, *lahu* or *'indahu aḥādīth*, and *qalīl al-ḥadīth*, respectively.

³ The *ṣaḥāba* receive neither qualitative nor quantitative grades in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

⁴ This estimate is probably conservative since one of these men, Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, transmitted over a thousand *ḥadīth* that are found in the surviving recension of his *Musnad*; furthermore, Ibn Ma'in reports that Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ, another one of these forty-seven men, collected 800 *ḥadīth* just from his teacher al-A'mash; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 276.

Juynboll.⁵ Secondly, as was seen in the previous chapter with regard to Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal, critics often employed relative grades, which in turn enable us to ascertain the relative influences of individual pupils of major scholars upon the following generation of students. Finally, one of the most remarkable aspects of qualitative *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism is the willingness of some early scholars in general, and, in particular, Ibn 'Awn, to distinguish between the *tābi'ūn* who transmitted *ḥadīth* precisely and those who transmitted merely the gist of the report (*bi-l-ma'nā*) or who engaged in deceptive transmission (*tadlīs*).⁶ The affiliation of these negative practices with generally reliable *ḥadīth* scholars by the early critics adds credibility, in my opinion, to the overall narrative of the first two centuries of *ḥadīth* transmission, while, paradoxically, it suggests that a significant percentage of the vast *ḥadīth* corpus *never* consisted of the exact locutions of the Prophet Muḥammad, even though the reports were considered faithful to his practices and opinions.⁷

One question that must be addressed prior to the beginning of this narrative is the date of the origins of *ḥadīth* transmission on a significant scale. M. M. Azami states confidently that "it is beyond doubt that the system of *isnād* began from the time of the Prophet" and his impressive collection of fifty *ṣaḥāba* for whom there are references to the act of written *ḥadīth* transmission suggests that this activity has existed at all times during Islamic history.⁸ Nabia Abbott states that "traditions were already being written down by quite a few even in Muḥammad's day" and does not appear to attach a post-prophetic date to the origins of *ḥadīth*.⁹ While Juynboll is interested

⁵ Juynboll's chronology of the development of *ḥadīth*, about which I will have more to say in footnote 10, misses many of the most important *ḥadīth* scholars and focuses primarily on cases of weak or controversial transmitters; see *Muslim Tradition*, 39–66. This rendering leaves the reader with the erroneous impression that the vast majority of transmitters were unreliable according to the Muslims' own standards, something that is not supported by the early sources I have studied.

⁶ The topic of *tadlīs* is discussed above, chapter II.2; see also *Muqaddima Ibn al-Ṣalāh*, 230–6.

⁷ This conclusion is corroborated by studies which compared the variants of individual reports, such as Motzki's "The Jurisprudence of Ibn Ṣihāb al-Zuhri", 38–47.

⁸ M. M. Azami, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature*, 237. Pages 34–182 of this book consist of the heart of Azami's argument for the perennial transmission of *ḥadīth* in written form, although most of the references are unique and derive from later sources.

⁹ Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, II, 7.

primarily in the *isnād* and its utility for dating *ḥadīth*, he does suggest that *ḥadīth* were in circulation in the (late) first century, since they were “standardized” during the lifetime of al-Zuhrī.¹⁰ Donner dates the collection of accounts of themes of Qurʾān, pre-Islamic Arabia, *nubuwwa*, *umma*, *futūḥ*, and *fitna*, to the years 70–100/689–718 and hypothesizes that these collectors “synthesized these materials into fairly coherent stories related to particular themes.”¹¹ Motzki, too, has stressed the importance of ‘Aṭā b. Abī Rabāḥ’s limited employment of *ḥadīth*, which he has demonstrated on the basis of his original analysis of ‘Abd al-Razzāq’s *Muṣannaf*, as “prime witnesses” for the existence of prophetic *ḥadīth* in the first century.¹² The message from these secondary sources is unambiguous—some *ḥadīth* were in circulation during the first century, but there does not appear to have been any development during the lifetimes of most *ṣaḥāba*.

I would like to propose that *ḥadīth* transmission did not begin in earnest until the first civil wars, and that it commenced in Medina, the one city populated by many *ṣaḥāba* that was relatively unaffected by the wars.¹³ An intriguing piece of evidence for this claim is a report found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* that dates the wide scale transmission of *ḥadīth* transmission to Medina in the immediate aftermath of the killing of ‘Uthmān.¹⁴ The report names the *ṣaḥāba* Ibn ‘Abbās,

¹⁰ *Muslim Tradition*, 10. Juynboll’s chronology of the development of *ḥadīth* demonstrates the peril of ignoring early sources like Ibn Sa’d’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, and relying instead upon late works, like Ibn Hajar’s *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*. He manages to miss entirely the importance of Medina in the first century, ignores the most important transmitters from Anas in Basra, and, in general, bases his conclusions on a mere couple dozen transmitters.

¹¹ Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 279.

¹² Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 158.

¹³ Recall that Goldziher recognized the early significance of Medina for *ḥadīth* transmission; see above in chapter 1. Motzki has argued, more specifically, for the role of Medina in the early development of the use of the *isnād*; *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 240–1.

¹⁴ [A list of names] . . . *yufṭūna bi-l-Madīna wa yuḥaddithūna ‘an rasūli llāhi ﷺ min ladun tuwaffiya ‘Uthmān ilā an tuwaffū*; *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, II, 437–8. The *isnād* for this report is al-Wāqidi → ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Ja’far b. ‘Abdullāh al-Anṣārī (d. 153/770) → his father → Ziyād b. Mīnā. Ibn Abī Ḥatīm reports on the authority of his father, that Ja’far b. ‘Abdullāh al-Anṣārī transmitted from Ziyād b. Mīnā, although he grades neither Ziyād nor Ja’far; *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta’dīl*, II, 482 (Ja’far) and III, 536 (Ziyād). Ja’far is the great-grandson of the *ṣaḥābi* Rāfi’ b. Sinān through his father and grandson of Rāfi’ through his mother. Ibn Hajar reports that ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd transmitted several *ḥadīth* from his father (Ja’far) on the authority of his grandfather

Ibn ‘Umar, Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī, Abū Hurayra, ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, Jābir b. ‘Abdullāh, Rāfi’ b. Khadij, Salama b. al-Akwa‘, Abū Wāqid al-Laythī, and ‘Abdullāh b. Buḥayna, among the founders of this activity. This report is supported further by my findings in the sixth chapter that all seven of the most prolific *ṣaḥāba* in the *Musnad* lived until at least the year 50/670, and by the fact that five of them lived in Medina. The primary consequences of this finding are that the first period of my narrative is titled “Before *ḥadīth*,” and that I consider the true foundations of this quintessential Sunnī discipline to have been established by the younger *ṣaḥāba* and *tābi‘ūn* during the early Umayyad reign.

VIII.2 Before *ḥadīth*: *Ṣaḥāba who died 11–40/632–660*

Only ten *ṣaḥāba* who passed away prior to Mu‘āwiya’s assumption of the caliphate played a noteworthy role in *ḥadīth* transmission. ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān were both religious as well as political leaders in Medina,¹⁵ and the Qur’ānic expert Ubayy b. Ka’b transmitted a minor amount of *ḥadīth* to Ibn ‘Abbās, Abū l-‘Āliya al-Riyāḥī, and his son Ṭufayl.¹⁶ ‘Umar’s decision to send ‘Abdullāh b. Mas‘ūd first to Ḥimṣ and then to Kufa was of great consequence to the shape of *ḥadīth* scholarship, since an illustrious group of pupils surrounded Ibn Mas‘ūd in his second posting.¹⁷ Kufa was also home to many minor transmitters of ‘Alī’s *ḥadīth*, none of whom approached the stature of Ibn Mas‘ūd’s disciples.¹⁸ A final *ṣaḥābi* who settled in Iraq,

(Rāfi’), that are found in the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd, see *al-Iṣāba*, I, 497. Al-Dhahabī includes a near-identical version of this report with the same *isnād* and names Ibn Sa’d as his source; *Siyar*, II, 606–7.

¹⁵ Despite their public positions, it is surprising that only 167 *atrāf* from ‘Umar and 73 from ‘Uthmān are found in Ibn Ḥanbal’s *Musnad*; this fact contributes to the argument that *ḥadīth* transmission began in earnest after the outbreak of the first *fitna*. Note that a *ṭaraf* represents, on average, a little less than three *ḥadīth* in the *Musnad*.

¹⁶ Ubayy transmitted 6 *atrāf* to Ibn ‘Abbās, 8 to the Basran *tābi‘ī* Abū l-‘Āliya, and 7 to his son that are found in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal. Ibn ‘Abbās also transmitted 17 *atrāf* from ‘Umar.

¹⁷ Ibn Mas‘ūd is the most prolific pre-*fitna* *ṣaḥābi* with 369 *atrāf* in the *Musnad*, a feat that must have been due largely to his high caliber pupils.

¹⁸ None of ‘Alī’s students transmits more than 19 *atrāf* in the *Musnad*, while Abū Wā’il, ‘Alqama, and Abū l-Aḥwaṣ transmit 43, 33, and 33 *atrāf* from Ibn Mas‘ūd, respectively.

Hudhayfa b. al-Yamān, also contributed to the dissemination of prophetic material, although he too appears to have lacked any prominent disciples. While the three Medinan *ṣaḥāba* were overshadowed immediately by the prolific post-*fitna* *ṣaḥāba*-transmitters, we shall see that none of the longer-lived Kufan *ṣaḥāba* ever transmitted as many *ḥadīth* as Ibn Masʿūd and ʿAlī.

It is possible, had *ḥadīth* transmission commenced prior to the first *fitna*, that Syria would have played a far greater role than it did in its early development. Four *ṣaḥāba* settled in Syria and transmitted a modest body of material that ultimately found its way into Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī's time in Syria was cut short, due largely to his piety-minded criticism that irritated Muʿāwiya, and much of his surviving material passed through non-Syrian pupils.¹⁹ Ibn Saʿd identifies a few Syrian "companions" of Muʿādh b. Jabal,²⁰ and the Kufan Ibn Abī Laylā appears to have played some role in disseminating his *ḥadīth*.²¹ Abū l-Dardā' and ʿUbāda b. al-Ṣāmit were both sent by ʿUmar to Ḥims and Jerusalem, respectively, and neither one of them was able to attract any pupils who were capable of attracting the wholesale admiration of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, or Ibn Ḥanbal.²² While it is tempting to speculate that Syria would have had a greater impact upon *ḥadīth* scholarship had these *ṣaḥāba* outlived the first civil war, the failure of these four men to attract superior students helps explain the general absence of Syrian *ḥadīth* scholars of widespread acclaim prior to al-Awzāʿī.²³

VIII.3 Foundations: Ṣaḥāba and senior tābiʿūn who died 40–80/660–699 and their pupils who lived prior to 120/738

While the political capital of the Umayyads was in Syria, the religious capital lay to the south in Medina. Five of the seven most

¹⁹ Two of the transmitters of multiple *atrāf* of his material are the Basran Abū l-Aswad al-Duʿālī (9 *atrāf*) and ʿAbdullāh b. al-Ṣāmit (14 *atrāf*).

²⁰ These include ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ghanm b. Saʿd and Yazīd b. ʿAmīra al-Zubaydī; *TK* 2001, IX, 444.

²¹ Ibn Abī Laylā transmits 9 *atrāf* in the *Musnad* from Muʿādh.

²² Abū l-Dardā's most prominent pupil in the *Musnad* is Abū Idrīs al-Khawlanī (7 *atrāf*).

²³ Although al-Zuhri spent much time in Syria, he is always considered a Medinan because of his family's roots in that city, as well as the fact that the vast majority of his teachers were Medinese.

prolific *ṣaḥāba* thrived in this city and were blessed by a number of distinguished pupils among the *tābiʿūn*. The *ḥadīth* of these men and women were disseminated to Kufa and Basra, where they found fertile ground. Mecca also experienced a brief period of energetic *ḥadīth* transmission during this period, largely due to the efforts of Ibn ʿAbbās and the major *tābiʿūn* ʿAṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ and Mujāhid b. Jabr. But Medina, city of the Prophet, was the most critical center and catalyst for *ḥadīth* transmission and requires a closer investigation as to the reasons for its prominence.

Did the Umayyads play an active role in the elevation of Medina as the *ḥadīth* capital of the Islamic world during their reign? There is strong evidence that Abū Hurayra, the most incessant transmitter of prophetic locutions among the *ṣaḥāba*, had close relations to the regime, as he was appointed acting governor when Marwān left town for pilgrimages or other functions.²⁴ Two of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam's sons, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and Muḥammad, are reported by Ibn Saʿd to have transmitted *ḥadīth* from Abū Hurayra, and it is quite likely that the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik was familiar with some of his material.²⁵ This being said, Abū Hurayra's prominence in the field of *ḥadīth* transmission was due most likely to his success in attracting at least four extraordinarily prolific students: Abū Ṣāliḥ Dhakwān (d. 101/719), Abū Salama b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 94/713), ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Hurmuz al-Aʿraj (d. 117/735), and Hammām b. Munabbih (d. 101/719). Ibn Ḥanbal collected 733 *atrāf* on the authority of Abū Hurayra from just these four sources in his *Musnad*, a sum that is greater than the total amount of *ḥadīth* he accumulated from all but four other *ṣaḥāba*.²⁶

The three next most prolific *ṣaḥāba* in Medina, ʿĀ'isha, Ibn ʿUmar, and Jābir b. ʿAbdullāh, all appear to have achieved their high status on the basis of their impressive students. Over one quarter of ʿĀ'isha's transmissions found in the *Musnad* were transmitted by her nephew ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94/713), and significant amounts of material reached this book from Abū Salama b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and al-Qāsim

²⁴ *TK* 2001, V, 253. The three reports that mention this fact do not specify during which year(s) these events took place.

²⁵ *TK* 2001, VII, 232–3.

²⁶ Abū Ṣāliḥ contributed 200 *atrāf*, Abū Salama 195, al-Aʿraj 195, and Hammām 143; this represents roughly one third of the Abū Hurayra material found in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*.

b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d. 108/726).²⁷ Ibn 'Umar's *mawla* and pupil Nāfi' (d. 117/735) is the largest transmitter of *ḥadīth* from any single *ṣaḥābī* in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, and Ibn 'Umar's son Sālim (d. 106/724) also played a significant role in the dissemination of his father's material.²⁸ Jābir b. 'Abdullāh was one of the longest-lived Medinan *ṣaḥāba* and the benefactor of the work of his Meccan pupil Abū l-Zubayr (d. 128/746), whom I have placed in the following period of *ḥadīth* transmission due to his presence in the third *ṭabaqa* in Ibn Sa'd's book.

A final group of three *ṣaḥāba* enriched the vibrant community of *ḥadīth* scholars in Medina during the Umayyad decades of the first and second centuries. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, transmitted an impressive amount of *ḥadīth*, especially given the absence of a single exceptionally prolific pupil.²⁹ 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ is reported to have transmitted written *ḥadīth* on a *ṣaḥīfa* entitled al-Šādiq to his grandson Shu'ayb b. Muḥammad, who in turn passed it on to his son 'Amr b. Shu'ayb, and it appears that eighty-five of 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr's *atrāf* in the *Musnad* were derived from this *ṣaḥīfa*.³⁰ Finally, Umm Salama, the second most prolific widow of the Prophet Muḥammad, taught a modest body of *ḥadīth* that found its way into the *Musnad*, despite the absence of any particularly strong champions of her material.³¹

A fundamental reason for the dominance of Medinan *ḥadīth* lies in the dedication of numerous *tābi'ūn* who disseminated hundreds of *ḥadīth* to their own pupils, many of whom hailed from Iraq and else-

²⁷ Both Abū Salama and al-Qāsim transmitted 68 *atrāf* from 'Ā'isha.

²⁸ Nāfi' contributed a stunning 510 *atrāf* on the authority of Ibn 'Umar to the *Musnad*; Sālim supplied an additional 146. There is an academic debate between Juynboll and Motzki about the reliability of the Nāfi' reports from Ibn 'Umar and whether Nāfi' even really was a student of Ibn 'Umar; see Juynboll, "Nāfi", the *Mawla* of Ibn 'Umar, and his Position in Muslim *Ḥadīth* Literature," *Der Islam* 70 (1993), 207–44 and Motzki, "Quo vadis *Ḥadīth*-Forschung? Eine kritische Untersuchung von G. H. A. Juynboll: 'Nāfi', the *Mawla* of Ibn 'Umar, and his Position in Muslim *Ḥadīth* Literature", *Der Islam* 73 (1996), 40–80; 193–231.

²⁹ Abū Sa'īd's most prolific pupil in the *Musnad* was the Basran Abū Naḍra al-Mundhir b. Mālik who transmitted 50 *atrāf* from him; a second notable student was the Kufan 'Aṭīyya b. Sa'd al-Awfi who added another 48 *atrāf* to Ibn Ḥanbal's compendium.

³⁰ Although 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr is associated with Egypt, his grandson and great-grandson lived in Medina; Ibn Sa'd includes them in the second and third *ṭabaqāt* of Medinans, respectively; TK 2001, VII, 239–40 (Shu'ayb) and 412 ('Amr).

³¹ The largest number of *atrāf* of her material pass through Abū Salama (12); no other individual transmits more than ten *atrāf* from her in the *Musnad*.

where. Ibn Sa'd preserves many of al-Wāqidi's observations about the large numbers of *ṣaḥāba* from whom several of these men transmitted these reports. Abū Salama b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, whose mother was the royal princess of Kinda mentioned above in the sixth chapter, was responsible for 252 *atrāf* in the *Musnad* from Abū Hurayra, 'Ā'isha, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī, Umm Salama, and Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, and heard reports from at least an additional five *ṣaḥāba* as well.³² 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, another Medinan son of a *ṣaḥābī*, transmitted a colossal amount of prophetic material from his aunt 'Ā'isha, as well as at least another eleven *ṣaḥāba*.³³ Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, a son-in-law of Abū Hurayra, played a relatively modest role in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, but was considered valuable not only for the prophetic material he transmitted from a dozen or so *ṣaḥāba*, but for his expertise in the legal rulings of the caliphs 'Umar and 'Uthmān as well.³⁴ Al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr not only transmitted a notable body of material from his aunt 'Ā'isha,³⁵ but is reported by Ibn 'Awn to have transmitted what he heard literally, as opposed to the common habit of imprecise transmission (*bi-l-ma'nā*), something which must have increased the value of his *ḥadīth* in the eyes of later, more critical compilers.³⁶ While these men are only four of the *fifty* Medinans who transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*' during this period, according to Ibn

³² Abū Salama transmitted 150 *atrāf* from Abū Hurayra, 68 from 'Ā'isha, 12 from Abū Sa'īd, 12 from Umm Salama, and 10 from Jābir. Al-Wāqidi reports that Abū Salama heard *ḥadīth* from Zayd b. Thābit, Abū Qatāda, Ibn 'Umar, 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr, and Ibn 'Abbās as well; TK 2001, VII, 153. Al-Wāqidi's claim that he transmitted from his father is contradicted by Ibn Ma'in, who states that he did not hear anything from him since he was very young at his time of death; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 64.

³³ Al-Wāqidi mentions that he heard *ḥadīth* from his father, Zayd b. Thābit, Usāma b. Zayd, 'Abdullāh b. al-Arqam, Abū Ayyūb, Abū Hurayra, Mu'āwiya, 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, and his brother 'Abdullāh; TK 2001, VII, 177. 'Urwa's preference for prophetic *ḥadīth* over *āthār* of *ṣaḥāba* has been observed by Motzki; see *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 240.

³⁴ *laysa aḥadun alamu bi-kullī mā qaḍā bihi 'Umar wa 'Uthmān*; TK 2001, VII, 119–42. This quote is from al-Wāqidi, who also reports that Sa'īd heard from Zayd b. Thābit, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, 'Ā'isha, Umm Salama, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ṣuhayb, Muḥammad b. Maslama, and, of course, Abū Hurayra. Ibn Ḥanbal includes 87 *atrāf* of Abū Hurayra from Sa'īd in the *Musnad*.

³⁵ Ibn Ḥanbal includes 68 of his *atrāf* from 'Ā'isha in the *Musnad*; al-Wāqidi mentions that al-Qāsim also heard from Abū Hurayra, Ibn 'Abbās, and Ibn 'Umar, among others; TK 2001, VII, 186. Ibn al-Madīnī reports that al-Qāsim had 200 *ḥadīth*; al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkira*, I, 75.

³⁶ Ibn 'Awn's opinion is found in both *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* and 'Abdullāh's *Ilal*; see TK 2001, VII, 186 and *Mawsū'at al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 166.

Sa'd,³⁷ their role in the establishment of their hometown as the capital of *ḥadīth* scholarship during the Umayyad era may have been even more critical than that of the small core of *ṣaḥāba* who eagerly described the practices of the Prophet whom they had witnessed.

Another reason for the prestige accorded to Medina was its role in exporting *ḥadīth* to the cities of Kufa and Basra. One of the most significant bridges between Medina and Kufa was Abū Ṣāliḥ Dhakwān, who moved to Kufa and shared his knowledge of Abū Hurayra's *ḥadīth* with young pupils, such as al-A'mash, whom we shall encounter in the next period.³⁸ Two other Kufans who brought Abū Hurayra's *ḥadīth* to Kufa were Abū Hāzim al-Ashja'i and Abū Zur'a b. 'Amr, a grandson of the *ṣaḥābī* Jarīr b. 'Abdullāh.³⁹ Both Masrūq b. al-Ajda' (d. 63/683) and al-Aswad b. Yazīd (d. 75/694), two disciples of Ibn Mas'ūd, brought a significant body of prophetic teachings back to Kufa from 'Ā'isha, and 'Aṭīyya b. Sa'd al-'Awfī (d. 110/728) performed the same service for Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī.⁴⁰ Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (d. 110/728), one of the venerable *tābi'ūn* of Basra, brought a substantial body of Abū Hurayra *ḥadīth* to his home, and Abū Naḍra did the same with *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī.⁴¹ These are only a few examples of the most prominent Iraqi *tābi'ūn* who acquired prophetic material in Medina in order to enhance the state of *ḥadīth* transmission in their home towns.

Although Kufa never enjoyed the presence of a *ṣaḥābī* who was more prolific than Ibn Mas'ūd, an additional five men contributed

³⁷ Only two of these fifty men receive a grade inferior to *thiqa* by Ibn Sa'd: 'Ikrima *mawla* Ibn 'Abbās and al-Muṭṭalib b. 'Abdullāh are evaluated as 'not authoritative' (*laysa yuḥtajjū bihi*); TK 2001, VII, 282, 409. Juynboll discusses briefly the controversial nature of 'Ikrima's transmissions; *Muslim Tradition*, 55–7.

³⁸ Abū Ṣāliḥ was considered reliable by both Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal; Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Farḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, III, 450–1.

³⁹ Both men transmitted 34 *atrāf* from Abū Hurayra that were included in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, and Ibn Sa'd mentions that both of them transmitted from Abū Hurayra; TK 2001, VIII, 197, 191.

⁴⁰ Masrūq is responsible for 36 *atrāf* from 'Ā'isha found in the *Musnad*, while al-Aswad contributed 45. 'Aṭīyya was the most prolific transmitter from Abū Sa'īd, with 48 *atrāf* in the *Musnad*. 'Aṭīyya is also one of the most important sources of Ibn 'Abbās's exegetical comments in al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr*; see GAS, I, 30–1. His highly recognizable family-*isnād* occurs approximately 1560 times in this book; note that the incorrect version of this *isnād* appears in Horst, "Zur Überlieferung im Koran-kommentar al-Ṭabarī," 294, and that the correct one is found in Berg, *The Development of Exegesis in Early Islam*, 96.

⁴¹ Ibn Sīrīn heard 68 *atrāf* from Abū Hurayra found in the *Musnad*; Abū Naḍra transmitted 50 *atrāf* from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī in this book as well.

a body of *ḥadīth* that equaled a little more than 350 *atrāf* in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal. Abū Mūsā l-Ash'arī, a rugged general and governor of Iraq, appears to have been the most prolific Kufan after Ibn Mas'ūd and 'Alī, due largely to the role of his son Abū Burda (d. 104/722), who served as a *qāḍī* in this city.⁴² A second *ṣaḥābī*, al-Barā' b. 'Āzib, gained prominence because of the volume of material transmitted by the centurion Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'i, whom we shall encounter in the next period.⁴³ A similar case to that of al-Barā' and Abū Ishāq is Jābir b. Samura al-Suwā'i, and his devoted student, Simāk b. Ḥarb al-Dhuhlī, also of the next period.⁴⁴ Finally, al-Mughīra b. Shu'ba and Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ, two men whom we saw in the sixth chapter were at opposite ends of the spectrum with regard to permissibility of the Umayyad practice of cursing 'Alī, each contributed 51 *atrāf* to the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, and were clearly unsuccessful in attracting any prolific pupils to disseminate their reports.

The strength in Umayyad-era *ḥadīth* scholarship in Kufa was located in an impressive array of *tābi'ūn*, many of whom had been pupils of Ibn Mas'ūd.⁴⁵ Leading transmitters of Ibn Mas'ūd's *ḥadīth* include Abū Wā'il Shaqīq b. Salama, 'Alqama b. Qays, Abū l-Aḥwaṣ 'Awf b. Mālik, al-Aswad b. Yazīd, and Masrūq b. al-Ajda'.⁴⁶ All of these men are reported by Ibn Sa'd to have heard reports from a variety of *ṣaḥāba*, such as 'Umar, 'Alī, and Abū Mūsā, and Abū Wā'il is said to have traveled as far as Syria to hear from Abū l-Dardā'.⁴⁷ A particularly significant pupil of these disciples of Ibn Mas'ūd was the short-lived Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'i (d. 95/714), who was a nephew of both 'Alqama and al-Aswad, and, according to Ibn 'Awn, transmitted *ḥadīth* imprecisely (*bi-l-ma'nā*).⁴⁸ Another particularly well-versed

⁴² Over one third (41) of Abū Mūsā's 118 *atrāf* in the *Musnad* can be traced through his son.

⁴³ Abū Ishāq is responsible for 37 of al-Barā's 94 *atrāf* in the *Musnad*.

⁴⁴ Simāk transmitted 35 of Jābir's 54 *atrāf* in the *Musnad*.

⁴⁵ Ibn Sa'd identifies a total of nineteen men, all of whom received the grade *thiqa*, who transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*' in the first two *tabaqāt* of Kufans.

⁴⁶ Abū Wā'il contributed 43 *atrāf* from Ibn Mas'ūd to the *Musnad*; 'Alqama and Abū l-Aḥwaṣ each added 33 *atrāf*; al-Aswad supplied 19 *atrāf*, and Masrūq added a mere 14.

⁴⁷ TK 2001, VIII, 222.

⁴⁸ TK 2001, VIII, 388–402. We shall see shortly that Ibrāhīm's disciples Maṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir and al-A'mash were the key figures of the next generation of Kufan *ḥadīth* scholars; another one of his pupils, al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba (d. 115/733) lived in the period currently under discussion.

may have been known more for their role in the origins of Qur'ānic exegesis and *fiqh* than *ḥadīth*, and Ibn Sa'd reports that Mujāhid read the Qur'ān to Ibn 'Abbās no fewer than thirty times.⁵⁹ 'Aṭā's prominence is illustrated further by Ibn Ma'in's report that people thought it odd that Ibn Abī Laylā, who was his senior, asked 'Aṭā' questions pertaining to religion, and Ibn Ma'in reports that Mujāhid made a trip to Kufa that enabled him to disseminate his erudition in the second most important city of religious learning in his day.⁶⁰ Note also that 'Ikrima is reported to have traveled to Kufa during the insurrection of al-Mukhtār, and that the Basran notable Ibn Sīrīn heard reports from him there as well.⁶¹ While Mecca was clearly overshadowed by its northern neighbor with regard to *ḥadīth* transmission, it is important to recognize that Ibn 'Abbās's impressive circle of pupils impacted both the fields of *ḥadīth* transmission, *fiqh*, and Qur'ānic exegesis during the period immediately following the first civil war.

In the eyes of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, the seeds of Sunnī *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism were planted firmly during the Umayyad period, particularly in the cities of Medina, Kufa, Basra, and Mecca. Medina dominated the origins of this movement, due to the presence of seven exceptionally articulate *ṣaḥāba* and their loyal pupils, several of whom came from Iraq. There is little evidence of overt Umayyad sponsorship of *ḥadīth* transmission during this time, with the notable exception of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz,⁶² and several prominent scholars did their utmost to avoid the regime. There is also very little evidence of *ḥadīth* being written at this point, and the employment of *isnāds* would have been

⁵⁹ TK 2001, VIII, 28. Mujāhid contributed 21 *atrāf* on the authority Ibn 'Abbās, 21 on the authority of Ibn 'Umar, and 11 on the authority of 'Ā'isha in the *Musnad*; 'Aṭā' transmitted 34 *atrāf* from Ibn 'Abbās, 37 from Jābir b. 'Abdullāh, and 13 from 'Ā'isha. Note that Ibn Ma'in reports that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān denied that Mujāhid heard *ḥadīth* directly from 'Ā'isha; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 77. This same opinion is attributed to Shu'ba by Ibn Ḥanbal in the *ʿIlal*; *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 223. For a thorough biography of 'Aṭā', see Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 246–62; for an analysis of his transmissions in the *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq, see *ibid.*, 77–172.

⁶⁰ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 203 (Ibn Abī Laylā's questions); I, 263 (Mujāhid's trip to Kufa).

⁶¹ TK 2001, IX, 193.

⁶² See, for example, Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 35–9. Note that Ibn Sa'd reports that 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz was *thiqa-ma'mūn* and transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*'; TK 2001, VII, 397.

utterly unnecessary, for the simple reason that it would have been easy for each *tābi'ī* to recall whether their *ṣaḥābī* teachers had heard their prophetic reports from the Prophet himself or from another *ṣaḥābī*. There does appear to have been a relatively high degree of laxity in precision transmission during this period, as major transmitters, such as Anas, al-Sha'bī, Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, were all reported to have conveyed the general meaning of the Prophet's locutions instead of his exact words. This imprecision should not, of course, be confused with fabrication, since we can safely assume that there was an effort by these early pious scholars to convey the message of whatever teaching they had learned rather than the actual citation.⁶³ While this sketch can hardly do justice to the vast enterprise of *ḥadīth* transmission during the first eight Umayyad decades as depicted in our third/ninth century sources, it does highlight a coterie of significant *ṣaḥāba* and *tābi'ūn* whose work set the stage for a period of systematic compilation by a couple dozen of their pupils, most of whom carried out their work uninterrupted by the violent transfer of power from the house of Banū Umayya to the descendents of Ibn 'Abbās.

VIII.4 The first compilers: The generation who died 120–150/738–767

The generation of Muslim scholars who lived during the twilight years of the Umayyads and the dawn of the 'Abbāsids transformed radically the nature of *ḥadīth* transmission. Most of these men were identified as specialists of a particular body of *ḥadīth* from a *ṣaḥābī* or *tābi'ī*, and they themselves cultivated easily identifiable circles of disciples. References to written materials become frequent in this period, although it is clear that the production of well organized books (*taṣnīf*) of *ḥadīth* required at least another generation to develop. While Medina maintained a high level of *ḥadīth* scholarship into the early 'Abbāsīd period, it was arguably surpassed by a group of Basrans during this time, and Kufa and Mecca experienced a slight reduction in their numbers of prominent *ḥadīth* folk.

⁶³ This assumption rests less on the religious sincerity of these early men than on the practical challenge of sheer fabrication in places where multiple authorities lived and were consulted by students who could have detected easily idiosyncrasies in one of their teacher's reports.

Medina enjoyed the presence of over thirty transmitters of 'many *ḥadīth*' during this transition period, according to Ibn Sa'd. The most famous of these men, al-Zuhrī (d. 124/742), spent almost his entire adult life in the service of the Umayyads, and synthesized the materials of Sa'id b. al-Musayyab, 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr, and Sālim b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar, among others, for his pupils.⁶⁴ While the importance of al-Zuhrī and his close relationship with the Umayyads has long been recognized and even studied in some detail by Nabia Abbott and Michael Lecker,⁶⁵ several other major *ḥadīth* transmitters of Medina have received relatively little attention. 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar b. Ḥaṣṣ (d. 147/764) was a prolific pupil of Nāfi' *mawlā* Ibn 'Umar,⁶⁶ and Hishām b. 'Urwa (d. 146/763) transmitted a significant body of 'Ā'isha's *ḥadīth* from his father.⁶⁷ Ibn Ma'in reiterates that 'Amr b. Shu'ayb's *ḥadīth* that trace back to his great-grandfather 'Abdullāh b. 'Amr were weak because they were transmitted solely by means of written materials, although, on a positive note, he affirms that 'Amr was reliable with that which he heard from Sa'id b. al-Musayyab and 'Urwa b. Zubayr.⁶⁸ Yahyā b. Sa'id al-Anṣārī (d. 143/

760) was considered by Sufyān al-Thawrī to have been one of the four *ḥuffāz* of this generation,⁶⁹ and Abū l-Zinād 'Abdullāh b. Dhakwān (d. 131/748) shared a teaching circle with the prolific jurist and *ḥadīth*-transmitter Rabi'a b. Abī 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Ra'y (d. 136/753)⁷⁰ in the Prophet's mosque in Medina for awhile.⁷¹ Despite the presence of high caliber *ḥadīth*-transmitters in Medina who outlived al-Zuhrī, it is quite significant that only al-Zuhrī was able to build an enthusiastic core of pupils, and we shall see that it was even more significant that almost all of these men, with the notable exception of Mālik b. Anas, chose to reside in cities other than Medina.

Basran scholars seized the mantle of *ḥadīth* scholarship during the period of 120–150/738–767 and held it at least through the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal.⁷² Ḥumayd b. Abī Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl (d. 142/759) was a major transmitter of *ḥadīth* from Anas b. Mālik, copied the writings (*kutub*) of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, and read them back to him.⁷³ Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/749) was

⁶⁴ Al-Zuhrī contributes 91 *atrāf* of 'Ā'isha from 'Urwa to the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, as well 82 *atrāf* of Ibn 'Umar from Sālim, and 33 from Anas b. Mālik, whom he apparently heard directly. For a list of his teachers, see ʿTK 2001, VII, 429.

⁶⁵ See Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, II, 30–6 and Michael Lecker, "Biographical Notes on Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī," 21–63.

⁶⁶ Ibn Sa'd evaluated him as *thiqa-ḥujja*; ʿTK 2001, VII, 531. Ibn Ḥanbal includes 125 *atrāf* of his from Nāfi' on the authority of Ibn 'Umar in the *Musnad*. He evaluated him as *thiqa* and as the most reliable pupil of Nāfi'; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 408–9. Ibn Ma'in held the opinion that 'Ubayd Allāh was as reliable as Mālik in his transmissions from Nāfi'; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 152.

⁶⁷ Ibn Ḥanbal includes 105 *atrāf* from Hishām → 'Urwa → 'Ā'isha in the *Musnad*. Note that Hishām was one of the first Medinans to move to Baghdad, a trend that was to intensify in the following generation. Ibn Sa'd evaluates him as *thiqa-thabt-hujja* and Ibn Ma'in states that he is as reliable as al-Zuhrī in his transmissions from his father 'Urwa; ʿTK 2001, VII, 462 and al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 203.

⁶⁸ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 355. Ibn Sa'd does not grade 'Amr b. Shu'ayb, but does mention his well-known *ṣahīfa* in his entry in the third *ṭabaqa* of Medinans; ʿTK 2001, VII, 412. Ibn Abī Ḥatīm includes three additional opinions from Ibn Ma'in, ranging from *laysa bi-dhāḥ*, *yuktabu ḥadīthuhu*, and that he got angry when asked about 'Amr and said "What can I say about him? The Imāms (of *ḥadīth*) transmit from him!" *Al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, VI, 238–9. Ibn Ḥanbal is reported to have said: "I do not know of anyone who has rejected (*taraka*) the *ḥadīth* of 'Amr b. Shu'ayb → his father → his grandfather" although he was unsure about the reliability of 'Amr's other reports; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 99–100. Ibn Hibbān observes that Ibn Ḥanbal, Ibn al-Madīnī, and Ibn Rāhawayh all consider 'Amr's *ḥadīth* authoritative (*yahṭajjūna bi-ḥadīthihi*); *ibid.* (extracted from *Kitāb al-majrūhīn*, II, 71).

⁶⁹ ʿTK 2001, VIII, 464. The other three *ḥuffāz* mentioned by al-Thawrī are 'Abd al-Mālik b. Abī Sulaymān and Ismā'il b. Abī Khālid of Kufa, and 'Āṣim al-Aḥwal of Basra. Ibn Sa'd grades Yahyā *thiqa-thabt-hujja*, Ibn Ma'in evaluates him as *thiqa* and Ibn Ḥanbal calls him both *thiqa* and "among the most reliable people" (*min aṭibat al-nās*); ʿTK 2001, VII, 517–8, al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 44, and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, IV, 120–2. Ibn Sa'd reports that Yahyā ordered Mālik to write 100 *ḥadīth* that the latter had heard from al-Zuhrī just prior to Yahyā's departure for Iraq. Mālik's student (and Ibn Sa'd's informant) Ismā'il al-Uwayṣī was surprised that Yahyā merely took the *ḥadīth* from Mālik without any oral verification. Mālik's reply to his student's incredulity was that "[Yahyā] was above that due to his deep understanding (of Islam)" (*fa-qultu li-Mālik: fa-mā qara'ahū 'alayka wa lā qara'tahā 'alayhi? qāla: lā kāna aḥqahu min dhālika*); *ibid.*, 518.

⁷⁰ Despite Rabi'a's *laqab* "al-Ra'y", Ibn Sa'd reports that he transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*', even though some *ḥadīth* scholars avoided them due to his *ra'y* (*wa ka'annahum yattaqūnahu li-l-ra'y*); ʿTK 2001, VII, 511. Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ḥanbal, and Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī all evaluate Rabi'a as *thiqa*; *ibid.*, *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 371–2, and Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, III, 475. Rabi'a's pupils include Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Mālik; *ibid.*

⁷¹ ʿTK 2001, VII, 508. Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal evaluate Abū l-Zinād as *thiqa*; *ibid.*, *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 240–1. Ibn al-Madīnī also remarks that "nobody after the senior *ṭabī'ūn* was more knowledgeable than Ibn Shihāb (al-Zuhrī), Yahyā b. Sa'id (al-Anṣārī), Abū l-Zinād, and Bukayr b. al-Ashajj (d. 120/738);" *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, V, 49.

⁷² Ibn Sa'd identifies fifteen Basrans as transmitters of 'many *ḥadīth*'; the only men who receive negative grades are 'Alī b. Zayd b. Ju'dān (*fihī ḍa'f*) and 'Amr b. 'Ubayd ("worthless"); ʿTK 2001, IX, 251 and 272.

⁷³ Ibn Ḥanbal includes 127 *atrāf* of Anas from Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl in the *Musnad*, although Ibn Ma'in claims that Ḥumayd heard only 24 *ḥadīth* directly from Anas and that he obtained the rest from Thābit al-Bunānī; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 246. The report about Ḥumayd copying al-Ḥasan's notes is found in *ibid.*, II, 268 and from

found among Ibn Sa'd's most highly decorated *ḥadīth* scholars in the previous chapter, and is reported by Ibn 'Awn to have been the most knowledgeable student of the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Sīrīn.⁷⁴ Ibn Ma'in preferred Dāwūd b. Abī Hind (d. 139/756) to the *qāḍī* 'Āṣim b. Sulaymān al-Aḥwal (d. 141/758), both of whom are reported to have been reliable transmitters who disseminated large quantities of *ḥadīth*.⁷⁵ A parallel to the ascetic Medinan Muḥammad al-Munkadir can be found in the Basran Sulaymān al-Taymī (d. 143/760), a disciple of Qatāda, whom Ibn Sa'd reports would spend entire nights in the mosque with his son and refused to transmit a *ṣaḥīfa* of *ḥadīth* from Jābir b. 'Abdullāh that he had not heard from one of his pupils.⁷⁶ Finally, at the opposite spectrum from Sulaymān al-Taymī, we find the wealthy Ibn 'Awn (d. 151/768), a reliable companion of al-Sha'bī, whose critical comments concerning the degree of precision of several major scholars' *ḥadīth* transmission have permeated this narrative.⁷⁷

Ibn Hanbal (on the authority of Hammād b. Salama) in *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 311. In one report, 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad mentions that he heard this information from both his father and Ibn Ma'in. Note that Ibn Hanbal preferred Ḥabīb b. al-Shahīd (d. 145/762) to Humayd, whereas Ibn Ma'in said that they were equal; *ibid.*, I, 312 and Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, III, 219. Abū Ḥatīm reports that 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar, Yahyā b. Sa'īd [al-Anṣārī], Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, and Shu'ba transmitted *ḥadīth* from him; *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, I.1 (Hyderabad, 1361-2), 409-10. Ibn Hanbal includes 83 Ibn 'Umar *atrāf* from Nāfi' on the authority of Ayyūb in the *Musnad*, as well as 24 Ibn 'Abbās *atrāf* from 'Ikrima. Ibn Sa'd reports that some of Ayyūb's pupils were surprised that he transmitted from 'Ikrima, to which he replied "I do not accuse him [of weakness]" *lā attahimihu*; *TK* 2001, VII, 284. Ibn Hanbal reports essentially the same information; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 25-6.

⁷⁵ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 166; *TK* 2001, IX 254-5. 'Āṣim served as *qāḍī* of al-Madā'in during the reign of al-Manṣūr and was reported to have been one of Sufyān al-Thawrī's "four *ḥuffāz*;" see *ibid.*, VIII, 464. Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in evaluate Dāwūd as *thiqa* and Ibn Hanbal grades him as *thiqa thiqa*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 353-4. 'Āṣim receives the grade of *thiqa* from these three scholars as well; *TK* 2001, IX, 255 and 321, al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 161, and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 202-3.

⁷⁶ *TK* 2001, IX, 251-2. Azamī credits Sulaymān b. Qays al-Yashkurī (d. 70-80) as the source of this *ṣaḥīfa*; *Studies in Early Hadith Literature*, 52-3. Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Hanbal all grade Sulaymān al-Taymī as *thiqa*; *TK* 2001, IX, 251-2, al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 49, and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 94-5. For more information, see above, III.2.

⁷⁷ *TK* 2001, IX, 261-8. Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in grade Ibn 'Awn as *thiqa*, and the former remarks that he was 'Uthmānī; *ibid.* and al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 57. Ibn al-Madīnī considered Ayyūb and Ibn 'Awn superior to their Basran contemporaries Hishām b. Ḥassān, Khālīd al-Ḥadhdhā, 'Āṣim al-Aḥwal, and Salama b. 'Alqama; Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, V, 130-1. For more information, see above, III.2.

The burden of *ḥadīth* transmission in Kufa during this time fell upon a small group of men, three of whom cultivated identifiable bodies of disciples.⁷⁸ The most senior of these scholars was Abū Ishāq 'Amr b. 'Abdullāh al-Sab'ī (d. 127/745).⁷⁹ His circle of pupils included most of the major Kufans of the following generation, such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh, his own son Yūnus, and the Basran Shu'ba.⁸⁰ Manṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir (d. 132/750), a pupil of Abū Wā'il and Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī,⁸¹ was favored by Ibn Ma'in over Qatāda and declared to be more reliable in his transmission than al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba (d. 115/733).⁸² A particularly famous pupil of Manṣūr was the Khurāsānī ascetic al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyāḍ, who traveled to Kufa explicitly for the purpose of studying with him, prior to his retirement in Mecca.⁸³ Sulaymān b. Mihrān al-A'mash (d. 148/765) achieved prominence as an expert reciter of the Qur'ānic reading of Ibn Mas'ūd, as well as a pupil of the Medinan transplant Abū Ṣāliḥ Dhakwān. Ibn Ma'in cautions us, however, that al-A'mash's *ḥadīth* from Anas and Ibn Abī Awfā were not actually heard from these

⁷⁸ Ibn Sa'd recognizes only eleven Kufans of this time as transmitters of 'many *ḥadīth*', two of whom he grades as weak. These two weak transmitters are Hammād b. Abī Sulaymān and Abū Sahl Muḥammad b. Sālim; *TK* 2001, VIII, 451, 480. Note that Ibn Ma'in declares that Hammād was trustworthy, at least in al-Dārimī's recension; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 58. The general evaluation of Ibn Hanbal is that Hammād was 'mediocre in *ḥadīth*' (*muqārīb al-ḥadīth*) and that only the reports transmitted by experts such as Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shu'ba should be considered; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 302-7. Note that there is a lone report from al-Marrūdhī that Ibn Hanbal graded Hammād as *thiqa*; *ibid.*, I, 305.

⁷⁹ Al-Bukhārī reports that Abū Ishāq heard many *ḥadīth* from al-Rāfi' b. Khadij and Ibn 'Umar; *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, III.2, 347-8. Ibn Abī Ḥatīm provides an extensive list of his teachers, many of whom are *ṣaḥāba*, such as Ibn 'Abbās, Zayd b. Arqam, al-Barā' b. 'Āzib, Ibn al-Zubayr, and Mu'āwiya; *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, VI, 241-2.

⁸⁰ Al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 59-60.

⁸¹ Al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-kabīr*, IV.1, 346.

⁸² Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 194 and 326. Ibn Ma'in declared Manṣūr to be the Kufan equivalent of Ayyūb al-Sakhtīyānī, and Ibn Sa'd declared him to be *thiqa-mā'mūn raḥīf*; *TK* 2001, VIII, 456. Ibn Hanbal, however, preferred al-Ḥakam to Manṣūr with respect to transmission from Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī, although he notes that Manṣūr was more accurate than al-A'mash; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 401-3. He also states that nobody except Ibn Abī Najīh has transmitted more material from Mujāhid than Manṣūr; *ibid.*, III, 403.

⁸³ *TK* 2001, VIII, 61. An interesting report, this time from Ibn Ma'in, is that Manṣūr's pupil, Jarīr b. Ḥāzim, would copy his *ḥadīth* on a slate, and then erase them and write more complete versions of the same reports from his other teacher, al-Mughīra b. Miqṣam al-Ḍabbī (d. 136/753); al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 355. Ibn Sa'd evaluated both Jarīr and al-Mughīra as *thiqa* and includes them among those who transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*'; *TK* 2001, VIII, 456 (al-Mughīra); IX, 278 (Jarīr).

two men (*mursal*), since he merely saw them in his youth and did not attend their classes.⁸⁴ Despite many irregularities in his vast corpus of *ḥadīth*, al-A'mash exhibited a profound influence upon two generations of scholars, namely that of Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shu'ba, and that of Wakī' b. al-Jarrāh. Finally, Ismā'il b. Abī Khālīd (d. 146/763) and 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān (d. 145/762) both earned the distinction from their pupil Sufyān al-Thawrī as being among the "four *ḥuffāz*" of their era.⁸⁵

Three major scholars graced the sacred city of Mecca during the transition from Umayyad to 'Abbāsid sovereignty in the central lands of Islam.⁸⁶ Abū l-Zubayr Muḥammad b. Muslim transmitted a vast array of *ḥadīth* from the Medinan *ṣaḥābī* Jābir b. 'Abdullāh that achieved inclusion in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal.⁸⁷ While Shu'ba's notorious distaste for Abū l-Zubayr is dutifully recorded by Ibn Sa'd, the latter, along with Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal, considered him to be a reliable transmitter.⁸⁸ The second prominent *ḥadīth* scholar of this time in Mecca was 'Amr b. Dīnār (d. 126/744), who transmitted a modest amount of *ḥadīth* from Jābir b. 'Abdullāh found in Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*,⁸⁹ as well as reports on the authority of Abū Hurayra from Abū Ṣāliḥ.⁹⁰ 'Amr's prestige may have been tempered by the fact that he did not actually hear directly the *ḥadīth* he transmitted on the authority of al-Barā' b. 'Āzib,⁹¹ and by his star-pupil's

⁸⁴ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 241.

⁸⁵ TK 2001, VIII, 464. Ibn Ḥanbal states that Ismā'il was more reliable than the Basran Dāwūd b. Abī Hind and that he is the best source for al-Sha'bī's teachings; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 100–3. Ibn Ḥanbal grades 'Abd al-Malik as *thiqa ḥāfiẓ*; *ibid.*, II, 379–80. Ibn Ma'in states that Ismā'il is *thiqa* and more knowledgeable of al-Sha'bī's teachings than Ibn 'Awn; Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, II, 175–6. Note that Ibn Abī Ḥatīm includes a variant of Sufyān al-Thawrī's "four *ḥuffāz*" report on the authority of Ibn al-Mubārak that only includes "three *ḥuffāz*": Ismā'il, 'Abd al-Malik, and Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī; *ibid.*, II, 174.

⁸⁶ Ibn Sa'd identifies only seven Meccans of this period as transmitters of "many *ḥadīth*", all of whom he evaluates as *thiqa*: Abū l-Zubayr Muḥammad b. Muslim, 'Amr b. Dīnār, Humayd b. Qays al-A'raj, 'Ubayd Allāh b. Abī Yazīd, 'Abdullāh b. Abī Najīh, Ibrāhīm b. Maysara, and Ismā'il b. Kathīr.

⁸⁷ Abū l-Zubayr's 255 *atrāf* from Jābir represent 43% of the latter's total corpus in the *Musnad*.

⁸⁸ TK 2001, VIII, 42; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 197; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 311.

⁸⁹ Twenty-one *atrāf* from Jābir found in the *Musnad* were transmitted by 'Amr.

⁹⁰ TK 2001, VIII, 40. See also Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 262–8.

⁹¹ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 91. Ibn Ma'in also reports praise of 'Amr from the latter's contemporary, Qur'ānic exegete and prolific *ḥadīth*-transmitter, Ibn Abī Najīh; *ibid.*,

observation that he transmitted *ḥadīth* imprecisely.⁹² The third major Meccan scholar of this time was Ibn Jurayj (d. 150/767), a pupil of 'Aṭā', Abū l-Zubayr, and 'Amr and one of the earliest composers of a book arranged according to legal topics.⁹³ Ibn Jurayj's *ḥadīth* were praised by Ibn Ḥanbal, who declared that they were equal to those of his illustrious younger contemporary Mālik.⁹⁴

We have arrived at the midway point in the chains of the vast majority of *isnāds* of reports collected by Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal. The greater part of the *ḥadīth*-transmitters whom we have encountered thus far either heard directly from the Prophet Muḥammad or from a *ṣaḥābī*, and thus would have had little need for an *isnād* in order to identify the sources for their *ḥadīth*. The logical starting place for the *isnād* is during the lifetime of the scholars whom we have just encountered, the generation of al-Zuhri, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, al-A'mash, and 'Amr b. Dīnār, some of whose pupils requested that they identify their sources for certain reports.⁹⁵ These pupils were of the generation of Shu'ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī, men who, as I argued in the fourth chapter, initiated the art of *ḥadīth* criticism and who expressed keen interest in *isnāds*. If my hypotheses are correct, the birth date of the *isnād* would fall, at the latest, around the year 100/718, during the heyday of the generation who passed away between 120–150/738–767.⁹⁶ While it is conceivable

1, 87. This report is also transmitted by 'Abdullāh b. Ahmad b. Ḥanbal; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 95.

⁹² TK 2001, VIII, 41. This report comes from Ibn 'Uyayna, whom Ibn Sa'd met in Mecca. Ibn Ḥanbal also mentions this report in 'Abdullāh's *Ullā*; see *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 95.

⁹³ Harald Motzki has argued that Ibn Jurayj's book can be extracted from 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Musannaf*, since over a quarter of 'Abd al-Razzāq's book consists of reports transmitted by Ibn Jurayj. Motzki describes Ibn Jurayj's book as neither a *ḥadīth* book, nor a *fiqh* book, but, rather, "a work of Tradition in the broader sense than as a legal codex;" *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 16. For a biography of Ibn Jurayj, see *ibid.*, 268–85.

⁹⁴ *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 381–6. Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in also grade him as *thiqa*; TK 2001, VIII, 53–4 and Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, V, 356–8. Ibn al-Madīnī considers Ibn Jurayj's *ḥadīth* from Nāfi' to be as reliable as those of Mālik from Nāfi'; *ibid.*, V, 357. For more critical evaluations, see Motzki, *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 275–81.

⁹⁵ For two such examples of this practice found in 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Musannaf*, see *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 119, 122, and 152. The large number of defective *isnāds* in the early sources would seem to argue against the widespread practice of *isnād*-examination.

⁹⁶ This is the date selected by Juynboll, albeit for different reasons; see above, VIII.1.

that *isnāds* were used by the first generation of *tābiʿūn*, as an oft quoted report by Ibn Sīrīn suggests,⁹⁷ their wholesale employment would not have been *necessary* until the generation of compilers who flourished during the end of the Umayyad period, since most of the scholars of this time would have been merely the second or third names in each chain of transmitters.⁹⁸

A second significant transformation to be witnessed among the men of the generation that experienced the transition between the Umayyad and ʿAbbāsīd regimes was the beginnings of a split between jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars. The fact that thirteen of the sixteen *ṣaḥāba* identified by Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī (d. 476/1083) as experts in Islamic law (*fiqh*) have appeared in our narrative as major *ḥadīth*-transmitters indicates the tight bond between experts in law and *ḥadīth* from the outset of Islamic history.⁹⁹ All seven of the Medinan *fuqahāʾ* whom Abū Ishāq identifies among the first generation of the *tābiʿūn* are reported by Ibn Saʿd to have transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*' and were held to be reliable.¹⁰⁰ This same story is repeated for at least eight of the second-generation Medinan jurists as well.¹⁰¹ Basran jurists

⁹⁷ See Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 17–8 and Azami, *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature*, 213. This quote is found as early as in the Introduction to Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi-sharḥ al-Nawawī*, I, 78.

⁹⁸ Motzki's conclusions are worth quoting in this regard: "If one investigates more precisely where the weakness of the *isnāds* lie, it becomes clear that except in the rarest of cases the responsibility lies not with Ibn Jurayj's sources, but with their informants; that is, the discontinuities usually date from the first century. This conclusion fits the observation made above, that at this time the use of *isnād* was not yet customary. This explains the weaknesses of *isnāds* with the scholars of the second half of the first/seventh century;" *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 241.

⁹⁹ Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ*, 45–50. The *ṣaḥāba* who excelled both at *fiqh* and *ḥadīth* were ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, Ibn Masʿūd, Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, Ubayy b. Kaʿb, Muʾādh b. Jabal, Abū al-Dardā, ʿAʿisha, Ibn ʿAbbās, Ibn ʿUmar, and ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀs. Those who were not prolific *ḥadīth*-transmitters were Abū Bakr, Zayd b. Thābit, and Ibn al-Zubayr.

¹⁰⁰ Abū Ishāq, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ*, 53–61. These seven *fuqahāʾ* were Saʿīd b. al-Musayyab, ʿUrwa b. al-Zubayr, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, Abū Bakr b. al-Hārith b. Hishām (d. 94/713), ʿUbayd Allāh b. ʿAbdullāh b. ʿUtba (d. 102/720), Khārja b. Zayd b. Thābit, and Sulaymān b. Yāsār.

¹⁰¹ Abū Ishāq, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ*, 62–6. These eight men were ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, al-Zuhri, ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad, Rabīʿa al-Raʿy, Abū al-Zinād, and Yahyā b. Saʿīd al-Anṣārī. Note also that the Meccan jurists ʿAṭā, Mujāhid, Ibn Abī Mulayka, ʿAmr b. Dīnār, and Ibn Abī Najīth are also all major reliable *ḥadīth*-transmitters. The only exception was ʿIkrima, who transmitted a large quantity of material, but whose authority was questioned by Ibn Saʿd, although it has been shown that he was vindicated ultimately by Ibn Maʿīn (in the al-Dārimī recension) and al-Bukhārī; see above, note 58.

identified by Abū Ishāq include al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn, Qatāda, Ayyūb, Ibn ʿAwn, as well as several other *tābiʿūn* who transmitted a significant quantity of *ḥadīth* and were considered reliable transmitters.¹⁰² Things in Kufa, however, were different. One of the six companions of Ibn Masʿūd had a mixed reputation, and only three of them were reported explicitly by Ibn Saʿd to have transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*'.¹⁰³ Ibn Saʿd does not provide any quantitative information about the three jurists of Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī's second *ṭabaqa* of Kufans, although it was possible to demonstrate the significant role of at least one of them in my analysis of Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*.¹⁰⁴ The third *ṭabaqa*, however, breaks the harmonious norm of jurist/reliable-*ḥadīth*-transmitters, and, instead, includes Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān, a weak transmitter of many *ḥadīth*, and Ibn Shubrama, a reliable transmitter of very few *ḥadīth*.¹⁰⁵ While Ibn Shubrama exerted a major influence upon the prolific *ḥadīth*-transmitter and jurist Sufyān al-Thawrī,¹⁰⁶ Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān was the primary teacher of Abū Ḥanīfa, eponym of one of the four Sunnī *madhhabs*, who was not considered by Ibn Saʿd's generation to have been much of a *ḥadīth*-transmitter.¹⁰⁷ It appears from this analysis that the split between

¹⁰² Abū Ishāq, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ*, 87–91. Other reliable prolific *ḥadīth* scholars of Basra who were also jurists include Abū Qilāba, Abū al-ʿĀliya, Yūnus b. ʿUbayd, and Humayd al-Ṭawīl.

¹⁰³ Abū Ishāq, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahāʾ*, 79–86. Ibn Saʿd declared al-Hārith al-Aʿwar to be weak, while Ibn Maʿīn said that he was 'not bad', and Ibn Ḥanbal quoted al-Shaʿbī calling him a liar; *TK* 2001, VIII, 288, al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 265 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 213–4. The three reliable prolific companions of Ibn Masʿūd were ʿAlqama, al-Aswad, and Masrūq; the two remaining ones were ʿUbayda b. ʿAmr and Shurayḥ al-Qaḍī.

¹⁰⁴ It was obvious from the analysis of the *atrāf* of the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal that Saʿīd b. Jubayr played a major role in the dissemination of Ibn ʿAbbās' *ḥadīth*; see above, note 58. As for Abū Ishāq's remaining two jurists, I assume that both Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī and al-Shaʿbī played at least moderately important roles in *ḥadīth* transmission due to the existence of circles of *ḥadīth*-friendly pupils identified by Ibn Maʿīn in al-Dārimī's *Tārīkh*, as well as the fact that their *ḥadīth* is included in all six of the canonical Sunnī books.

¹⁰⁵ Only one of Abū Ishāq's five jurists fits the previous mold of expertise in *fiqh* and *ḥadīth*, namely al-Ḥakam b. ʿUṭayba. Ibn Saʿd provides neither qualitative nor quantitative grades for two of the jurists in this *ṭabaqa*: Ḥabīb b. Abī Thābit and the *qāḍī* Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Abī Laylā. Both Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal are reported to have graded Ḥabīb as *thiqā*; Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Farḥ wa l-taʿdīl*, III, 107–8 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 220–2. Ibn Ḥanbal reports that Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān declared Ibn Abī Laylā to be weak and he himself indicates a preference for his *fiqh* over his 'inconsistent' *ḥadīth* (*fihī idṭirāb*); *al-Farḥ wa l-taʿdīl*, VII, 323. Ibn Maʿīn grades Ibn Abī Laylā as *laysa bi-dhāk*; *ibid*.

¹⁰⁶ Al-Thawrī identifies Ibn Shubrama and Ibn Abī Laylā as his two primary teachers of *fiqh*; *TK* 2001, IX, 247 and *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 285.

¹⁰⁷ See above, note 81.

jurists and *ḥadīth* scholars originated in Kufa around the end of the first/eight century and, only later, spread to Medina and Baghdad.

A final problem that I must address is Abū Ḥanīfa, who flourished during the period under discussion, because he was a weak transmitter of *ḥadīth* in the opinions of Ibn Sa'd and his contemporaries and, consequently, would not have been considered a religious authority in the eyes of the first Sunnīs of the third/ninth century according to my arguments.¹⁰⁸ In other words, was Abū Ḥanīfa considered a Sunnī by the third/ninth century *ḥadīth* scholars? While Ibn Ḥanbal transmits several highly negative reports from his predecessors about Abū Ḥanīfa,¹⁰⁹ there is a fascinating report in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh* in

¹⁰⁸ A study of the problems surrounding the authentic teachings of Abū Ḥanīfa can be found in van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, I, 183–212. See also U. F. 'Abd-Allāh's entry "Abū Ḥanīfa" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, I (London, 1982), 295–301. 'Abd-Allāh states that "the disputes between Abū Ḥanīfa and the proponents of Hadith pertained primarily to his rejection of isolated Hadith (*aḥādīth al-āḥād*)," observes that al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī was chastised two centuries after his death by Ibn Khallikān for having included "slandorous" reports by *ḥadīth* critics in his biographical notice for Abū Ḥanīfa in *Tārīkh Baghdad*, and hypothesizes that "Abū Ḥanīfa seems in general to have always been highly esteemed by the majority of the Muslim community"; *ibid.*, 300 and 296. He does not mention Ibn Ḥibbān's observation that Abū Ḥanīfa was not skilled at *ḥadīth* (*lam yakun al-ḥadīthu šinā'atahu*), made errors in 120 of the 130 *ḥadīth* he transmitted, and was therefore not an authority with regard to reports (*akḥbār*); Ibn Ḥibbān, *Kutāb al-majrūḥīn*, III, 63. Ibn Ḥibbān also criticizes Abū Ḥanīfa for being a proselytizer of the Muḥājir and includes several reports of his detractors, including one which makes reference to al-Ḥumaydī who, while reading a book called *Refutation of Abū Ḥanīfa* in the Masjid al-Ḥarām, refused to mention Abū Ḥanīfa's name because of the sanctity of the location; *ibid.*, III, 64–73. 'Abd-Allāh also ignores Ibn 'Adī's collection of predominantly hostile reports (but which does record an anecdote that Shu'ba was disposed favorably to Abū Ḥanīfa) that includes Ibn Abī Dāwūd's observation that the Imāms of the major regions—Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, al-Layth b. Sa'd, al-Awzā'i, and Ibn al-Mubārak—all had issues (*takallama fihī*) with Abū Ḥanīfa; *al-Kāmil fi ḍu'afā' al-rijāl*, VII, 2476. Ibn 'Adī's personal verdict is that the majority of Abū Ḥanīfa's *ḥadīth* have errors of a variety of types, and that only ten of his three hundred *ḥadīth* are sound, largely due to the fact that he was not one of the *ḥadīth* scholars (*ahl al-ḥadīth*); *ibid.*, VII, 2479. Even Abū Nu'aym al-Isbahānī has negative things to say about Abū Ḥanīfa in his short book of weak transmitters; Abū Nu'aym, *Kutāb al-ḍu'afā'*, 194. He appears to be particularly disappointed by Abū Ḥanīfa's refusal to abandon his belief in the 'created' Qur'ān, as well as his "many errors and inaccuracies"; *qāla bi-khalq al-Qur'ān wa-stuḥba min kalāmihī l-radi'i ghayra marratin kathīr al-khaṭa' wa l-awḥām*.

¹⁰⁹ *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 16–21. The chorus of anti-Abū Ḥanīfa *ḥadīth*-folk found in these reports includes Mālik (Abū Ḥanīfa "duped [*kāda*] the religion"), Ibn Maḥdī, Ḥammād b. Salama, Sharīk, and Ḥafṣ b. Ghiyāth; even Sufyān al-Thawrī is reported to have encouraged Abū Ḥanīfa to repent on two

which Ibn Ma'īn, in a candid tone, remarks "I will not lie before God—it is likely that we heard a legal opinion of Abū Ḥanīfa that we found to be good, and so we adopted it."¹¹⁰ The term used to describe Abū Ḥanīfa by both Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Qutayba is *ṣāḥib al-ra'y*, an expression that stands in a clear contrast to the expression *ṣāḥib sunna* that was examined briefly in the previous chapter. Very few men are identified by either Ibn Sa'd or Ibn Qutayba as belonging to the *aṣḥāb al-ra'y*, although it is significant to note that only Ibn Qutayba includes men who excelled in *ḥadīth* transmission in this group.¹¹¹ Since Ibn Sa'd does not express his opinions as to the relationship of the term *ṣāḥib al-ra'y* to *ṣāḥib sunna* anywhere and includes Abū Ḥanīfa in both the fourth *ṭabaqa* of Kufans as well as the men of Baghdad, it seems safe to assume that he considered this famous jurist to have been a member, albeit unreliable and non-authoritative, in the greater project of *ḥadīth* transmission that lay at the heart of the third/ninth century articulation of Sunnī Islam.

occasions. Al-'Uqaylī quotes Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion of Abū Ḥanīfa as a liar, *ḍā'if*, and that his *ḥadīth* should not be mentioned; *ibid.*, IV, 19. In *Tārīkh Baghdad*, Sufyān al-Thawrī is reported by Ibn Ḥanbal to have described Abū Ḥanīfa as "neither trustworthy nor secure" (*ghayr thiqa wa ghayr ma'mūn*), and Ibn Ḥanbal himself is claimed to have stated that Abū Ḥanīfa was worse (*ashaddu 'alā l-muslimīn*) than 'Amr b. 'Ubayd, a founder of the Mu'tazila, because he had disciples (*lahu aṣḥāb*); *ibid.*, IV, 20–1.

¹¹⁰ *lā nakdhibu llāha rubbamā sami'nā l-sha'ya min ra'y Abī Ḥanīfa fa-staḥsannāhu fa-akhadhna bihi*; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 220. This same quote is put into the mouth of Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān by Ibn Ma'īn in *Tārīkh Baghdad*, XIII, 345. Ibn Ma'īn appears to have been less hostile to Abū Ḥanīfa than Ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Sa'd, as al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī reports a variety of opinions attributed to him in which he insists that Abū Ḥanīfa was too noble to lie, that he was *ṣadīq*, that his *ḥadīth* should not be written, and, in a few reports, that he was *thiqa*; *Tārīkh Baghdad*, XIII, 421–2. Note also the report cited from *Tadhkirat al-huffāz* that Wakī' gave *fatwas* according to the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfa; see above III.3, note 22.

¹¹¹ The *aṣḥāb al-ra'y* and/or pupils of Abū Ḥanīfa in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* are Abū Ḥanīfa, Abū Yūsuf, Asad b. 'Amr al-Bajālī, 'Āfiya b. Yazīd al-Awdī, al-Shaybānī, Yūsuf b. Abī Yūsuf, al-Ḥusayn b. Ibrāhīm, Bishr b. al-Walīd al-Kindī, al-Mu'āllā b. Maṣṣūr, and al-Naḍr b. Muḥammad al-Marwazī; see Melchert, "How Hanafism came to Originate in Kufa and Traditionalism in Medina," 326. Ibn Qutayba names Ibn Abī Laylā, Abū Ḥanīfa, Rabī'a al-Ra'y, Zufar b. al-Hudhayl, Abū Yūsuf, and Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, along with the master *ḥadīth* scholars al-Awzā'i, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Mālik; *al-Ma'ārij*, 496–99.

VIII.5 *The demise of Medina and the rise of Iraq:
The generation who died 150–180/767–796*

Five major trends can be observed in the development of *ḥadīth* scholarship during the first generation of scholars who spent the better part of their adult lives under 'Abbāsid rule. The first of these is the promulgation of systematically organized books, a topic mentioned in both the third and fourth chapters of this study, and that was supported by 'Alī b. al-Madīnī's oft-cited list of "those who composed books (*asṇāf*)" in his three-part outline of master *ḥadīth* scholars.¹¹² The second trend, which I discussed in detail in the fourth chapter, was the dawn of both *ḥadīth* criticism, due to men such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, and *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, by the likes of Shu'ba and Mālik. The third trend during this period was the near-total collapse of quality *ḥadīth* scholarship in Medina due to several diverse factors that require investigation. The fourth change was a deepening of Kufan *ḥadīth* scholarship, due to the labors of the industrious pupils of Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'ī, Manṣūr, and al-A'mash. A final trend was the continuous rise of Basran *ḥadīth* scholarship, that was propelled largely by the younger pupils of Qatāda, as well as by those of Ayyūb al-Sakhtīyānī. It will be clear from this section that shortly after the middle of the second century the twin cities of Iraq had eclipsed thoroughly the original capital of *ḥadīth* scholarship in the Hījāz, and that the reasons for this transformation had less to do with the greater 'Abbāsid investment in Iraq and more to do with the internal dynamics of the *ḥadīth*-folk themselves.

What happened to Medina, home of Abū Hurayra, Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab, and al-Zuhri? It is tempting to suggest that the failed revolt of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (145/762) was a reason for this precipitous decline in *ḥadīth* scholarship, but this is untenable when we consider revolts, such as the Battle of Ḥarra (63/683), that did not make a dent in religious scholarship, despite a

terrible loss of life.¹¹³ Furthermore, al-Nafs al-Zakiyya's brother raised a revolt in Basra that was quelled, while, simultaneously, Basran *ḥadīth* scholarship reached unprecedented heights. The construction of Baghdad, begun during the reign of al-Manṣūr, is another possible reason for this decline, and, while certain prominent Medinans, such as Ibn Ishāq and his only Medinan pupil, Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd, were tempted to relocate there, the number of emigrants would have hardly necessitated a collapse in scholarship. A close examination of Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, as well as al-Dārimī's *Tārīkh*, suggests that the probable reasons for the fall of Medina lie in the rapid increase of weak Medinan transmitters and the decision of the vast majority of al-Zuhri's pupils not to settle in the City of the Prophet.

An analysis of the members of the generation of Mālik b. Anas in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* reveals the bleak landscape of Medinan *ḥadīth* scholarship during the early 'Abbāsid period. Ibn Sa'd identifies a mere ten men as having transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*' in this *ṭabaqa*. He evaluates three of these men as *ḍa'īf*, one of them as 'non-authoritative', and describes 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam as *ḍa'īf jiddan*.¹¹⁴ Two men receive the lackluster grade *ṣāliḥ*,¹¹⁵ and only 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abdullāh b. Mājishūn, Sulaymān b. Bilāl, and Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd receive the grade *thiqa*.¹¹⁶ Three additional Medinan contemporaries of Mālik who transmitted a small amount of *ḥadīth* were evaluated by Ibn Sa'd as unreliable.¹¹⁷ Even 'Abdullāh b. 'Umar b. Ḥaḥṣ (d. 171/787), a prominent transmitter from Nāfi' of Ibn 'Umar's *ḥadīth* who

¹¹³ Many prominent *ḥadīth* scholars, most of whom were far from the revolt of Nafs al-Zakiyya, may have supported it; see Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early 'Abbāsids*, 73–6.

¹¹⁴ Abū Ma'shar and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī l-Zinād are graded *ḍa'īf*; Hishām b. Sa'd al-Khashshāb receives *yusad'af*; Abū Bakr b. 'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad was graded *laysa yuḥtajjū bihi*; TK 2001, VII, 597, 594, 576, and 582. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd's entry can be found in TK 2001, VII, 592. Ibn Ma'in declared his *ḥadīth* to be worthless, and Ibn Ḥanbal also declared him to be weak; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 116 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, II, 325–6. Note that Ibn Zayd's exegetical opinions are cited by al-Ṭabarī over 1800 times in his *tafsīr*; see Horst, "Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar at-Ṭabarī," 305.

¹¹⁵ These men are 'Abdullāh b. Ja'far b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān and al-Zuhri's nephew, Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh; TK 2001, VII, 580, 579. Ibn Ma'in grades the nephew of al-Zuhri as *ḍa'īf*, while Ibn Ḥanbal said *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth in shā'a llāh*; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 48 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 281.

¹¹⁶ TK 2001, VII, 593, 589, 582.

¹¹⁷ These men are Kathīr b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Awf, Yazīd b. 'Iyād, and Saḥbal b. Muḥammad; TK 2001, VII, 591, 598. Ibn Ma'in evaluates the first two of these men as *ḍa'īf*; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 107 and 60.

¹¹² This presentation, along with copious references, can be found above in IV.2.1. The men identified by 'Alī b. al-Madīnī as the first book compilers are Mālik, Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Jurayj, Ibn 'Uyayna, Sa'īd b. Abī 'Arūba, Ḥammād b. Salama, Abū 'Awāna, Shu'ba, Ma'mar, Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Awzā'ī, and Hushaym b. Bashīr. All of these men, except Hushaym and Ibn 'Uyayna, are found in the period currently under discussion. Note also al-Tirmidhī's list of the earliest compilers, cited above III.2, note 14.

lived into this period, was considered weak by Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Hanbal.¹¹⁸ While it is not entirely clear why Medinan transmitters of this generation were, on the whole, such a sorry, unreliable lot, it seems more appropriate to put the blame on these individuals rather than any external causes.

Another reason for the decline of Medinan *ḥadīth* scholarship, in addition to the preponderance of unreliable transmitters at this time, was the global dispersion of al-Zuhri's most prominent students, the majority of whom never had any tie to his hometown in the first place. One reason for this dispersion was, without doubt, the fact that al-Zuhri himself left his home city in order to serve the Umayyad caliphs from 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz to Hishām, and that he spent much time on his estates outside of Medina.¹¹⁹ I mentioned in the previous chapter that Ibn Hanbal considered Ma'mar, Yūnus b. Yazīd, and 'Uqayl b. Khālīd to have been the most prodigious transmitters of al-Zuhri's knowledge, and it is significant that the first of these men spent much of his life in the mountainous refuge of Ṣan'a' and the latter two lived in the port city of Ayla.¹²⁰ Two other important pupils of al-Zuhri, al-Layth b. Sa'd and al-Awzā'i, were natives of Egypt and Syria, and even the youngest major student of his who lived well into the next period of *ḥadīth* scholarship, Ibn 'Uyayna, lived in Mecca. Even though a couple of al-Zuhri's students engaged in questionable practices of *ḥadīth* transmission,¹²¹ the absence of a core of major Zuhri pupils in his hometown unquestionably contributed to its qualitative decline during the middle decades of the second century.

¹¹⁸ TK 2001, VII, 532 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 268. Note that Ibn Ma'in considers 'Abdullāh's transmission from Nāfi' as *ṣāliḥ*; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 151. Thirty-nine *atṭarīf* from 'Abdullāh → Nāfi' → Ibn 'Umar are found in the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal.

¹¹⁹ Lecker provides a useful overview of these estates; "Biographical Notes of Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhri," 50–62.

¹²⁰ See above, VII.2, note 55 and VII.3, note 83.

¹²¹ Ibn Ma'in reports that al-Awzā'i took a book of Zuhri material from Muḥammad b. al-Walīd al-Zubaydī, the *qāḍī* of Ḥimṣ, and transmitted the material as if he had heard it from al-Zuhri himself; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 152. Ibn Ma'in also considers the Zuhri material handled by Ibn Jurayj to be worthless; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 44. Ibn Hanbal observes in the *ʿIlal* that the Egyptian Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb transmitted Zuhri material from books that he had not actually heard; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, IV, 146. Note that Ibn Sa'd grades Yūnus as 'non-authoritative' and that Ibn Hanbal reports that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān rejected (*taraka*) his *ḥadīth*; TK 2001, IX, 529; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, IV, 180. Ibn Ma'in, however, declares Yūnus to be *thiqa*; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 45.

Kufa, which has been recognized as a major *ḥadīth* center only recently by Western scholarship,¹²² flourished in this age with several virtuoso scholars. I have discussed already in the fourth chapter the acumen of Sufyān al-Thawrī at some length, and Ibn Sa'd reports how, during his period of hiding from the Caliph in Basra, Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān and Ibn Mahdī seized the opportunity to write down al-Thawrī's *ḥadīth*.¹²³ Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya (d. 173/789), a companion of Abū Ishāq and al-A'mash, was one of four *ḥuffāz* according to Ibn Hanbal, and Sa'id b. Manṣūr is quoted as telling one of his Egyptian pupils "write down Zuhayr's *ḥadīth*!"¹²⁴ The third Kufan of Ibn Hanbal's four *ḥuffāz*, Zā'ida b. Qudāma (d. 161/778), was held in higher esteem than Zuhayr by Ibn Ma'in,¹²⁵ and is one of the few men identified by Ibn Sa'd as *ṣāḥib sunna wa jamā'a*.¹²⁶ Ibn Ma'in considered Isrā'il b. Yūnus (d. 160/777) to be more reliable than the Kufan *qāḍī* Sharīk b. 'Abdullāh (d. 177/793),¹²⁷ who in turn was more reliable than Abū l-Aḥwaṣ Sallām b. Sulaym (d. 179/795).¹²⁸ Shaybān b. 'Abd al-Rahmān

¹²² See Christopher Melchert, "How Ḥanafism came to Originate in Kufa and Traditionalism in Medina."

¹²³ Ibn Sa'd reports that Ibn al-Mubārak, Jarīr b. Hāzim, Hammād b. Salama, and Hammād b. Zayd all heard from al-Thawrī in Basra. Only Abū 'Awāna, apparently, did not attend Sufyān's sessions, because he felt that the latter had insulted him during a pilgrimage; TK 2001, VIII, 492–5.

¹²⁴ TK 2001, VIII, 487–8. Recall that Sa'id b. Manṣūr was a major Khurāsānī *ḥadīth* compiler who ultimately settled in Mecca and was a member of the generation of Ibn Sa'd; see above, V.2.6.

¹²⁵ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 322. Ibn Ma'in remarks that Zā'ida checked (*arada*) his written *ḥadīth* with Sufyān al-Thawrī.

¹²⁶ TK 2001, VIII, 499. Note that Zā'ida died, like Ibn al-Mubārak of the next generation, while fighting the Byzantines in Anatolia. Ibn al-Nadīm reports that he composed a *Kutāb al-sunan*, *Kutāb al-qirā'āt*, *Kutāb al-tafsīr*, *Kutāb al-zuhd*, and *Kutāb al-manāqib*; *Fihrist*, 282.

¹²⁷ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 52. However, according to al-Dārimī, Ibn Ma'in preferred Sharīk's transmissions from Abū Ishāq al-Sabī'i to those of Isrā'il; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, IV, 366–7. This is also the opinion of Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī; *ibid.* Ibn Sa'd mentions that Isrā'il transmitted many *ḥadīth* and was *thiqa*, but that "some people declare him to be weak" (*minhum man yudā'ifuhū*); TK 2001, VIII, 495. Ibn Ma'in grades him as both *ṣadūq* and *thiqa* and Ibn Hanbal grades him as *ṣāliḥ al-ḥadīth*, Shaykh, and *thiqa*; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 59, 72, 235 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 89–91. Sharīk receives the grade of *thiqa-ma'mūn*, with many errors from Ibn Sa'd, and, with the exception of his old transmissions from Abū Ishāq, is considered inferior to Isrā'il by Ibn Hanbal as well; TK 2001, VIII, 499–500 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 141–4.

¹²⁸ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 271. Ibn Sa'd evaluates Abū l-Aḥwaṣ as *ṣāliḥ* and reports that he transmitted many *ḥadīth*; TK 2001, VIII, 500. Ibn Hanbal grades him as 'not bad, *thiqa*' and notes that "he probably made mistakes;" *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 125.

(d. 164/781), a reliable, prolific *ḥadīth*-transmitter and grammarian, was recruited by Dāwūd b. 'Alī b. 'Abdullāh b. 'Abbās to serve as a royal tutor in Baghdad,¹²⁹ and Ibn Sa'd mentions that the somewhat obscure 'Isā b. al-Mukhtār heard the *muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Laylā, in what is one of the earliest references to a *muṣannaf* in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.¹³⁰ One final Kufan of note from this period, Ḥasan b. Šālih b. Ḥayy (d. 167/784), synthesized the qualities of legal expertise (*fiqh*) and sound *ḥadīth* transmission, a combination that his senior contemporary, Abū Ḥanīfa, seems to have lacked.¹³¹

The companions of Qatāda and Ayyūb, as well as the labors of the critically-minded Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj, elevated the status of Basran *ḥadīth* to a level of unequivocal superiority during the first half-century of the 'Abbāsid caliphate. Shu'ba's contribution to Islamic scholarship has been dealt with in much detail in the fourth chapter, and his pupils formed the nucleus of Basran *ḥadīth* transmitters for the generation of the teachers of Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal. Hishām al-Dastawā'ī (d. 152/769) was one of the most reliable links between Qatāda, Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr, and Abū l-Zubayr, and his own pupils Shu'ba, Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, and Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn.¹³²

¹²⁹ TK 2001, VIII, 498. Ibn Ma'in grades Shaybān as "reliable with everything" and Ibn Ḥanbal praises him as *ṭabī* and superior to al-Awzā'ī with respect to his material from Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr due to his sound book (*kitāb ṣaḥīḥ*); al-Dārimī, *Tārikh*, 53 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 165–6. I mentioned in the previous chapter that Ibn Ma'in preferred the *tafsīr* of Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba from Qatāda to the *tafsīr* of Shaybān; see above VII.2.

¹³⁰ TK, 2001, VIII, 500. 'Isā transmitted this *muṣannaf* to the Kufan *qādī* Bakr b. 'Abd al-Rahmān (d. 211/826), who transmitted *ḥadīth* from it during Ibn Sa'd's lifetime; see also TK 2001, VIII, 530 (Bakr b. 'Abd al-Rahmān). Both of these men were descendants of the *ṣaḥābī* Abū Laylā, and Ibn Sa'd did not grade either one of them. 'Isā does not appear to have an entry in *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, but both he and Bakr did transmit *ḥadīth* found in the *Sunans* of Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī, and Ibn Māja; Ibn Hajar, *Taqrib*, 376 and 65. Bakr was a teacher of Ibn Abī Shayba and Ibn Abī Ḥatīm reports that neither his father nor Abū Zur'a would write his *ḥadīth*; *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, II, 389. Note that al-Mizzī does not add any additional information about 'Isā b. Mukhtār; *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, XXIII, 27–8.

¹³¹ TK 2001, VIII, 495. Ḥasan lived the last months of his life in hiding from the caliph al-Mahdī with 'Alī b. Zayd b. 'Alī, whose daughter he married. Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal evaluate him as *ṭhiqa*; al-Dūrī, *Tārikh*, I, 247, 325 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 255–6. Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī also includes Ḥasan among the prominent jurists of Kufa of this period, along with Sufyān al-Thawrī, Sharīk b. 'Abdullāh, and Abū Ḥanīfa; *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā*, 84–6.

¹³² These names were supplied by al-Bukhārī; *al-Tārikh al-kabīr*, IV.2, 198. Ibn Ma'in reports that Hishām was one of the best transmitters from Qatāda and Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr; al-Dūrī, *Tārikh*, II, 192 and 143, respectively. Ibn Sa'd grades him *ṭhiqa-ṭabī-ḥujja*, while Ibn Ḥanbal calls him *ṭabī*; TK 2001, IX, 279 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, IV, 39–41.

Ma'mar b. Rāshid (d. 153/771), who lived much of his life in Ṣan'a', was another significant pupil of Qatāda who, according to Abū Ḥatīm al-Rāzī, was the only scholar of his generation to collect *ḥadīth* from all six of the leading teachers of his day.¹³³ Despite a tendency to transmit much that he did not hear from Qatāda, Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba (d. 156/773) was considered by Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal to have been one of his premier pupils.¹³⁴ Turning to Ayyūb's disciples, we find that Ḥammād b. Zayd was his most prominent pupil due to his twenty year tenure with him, and that Ibn Ma'in considered 'Abd al-Wārith b. Sa'id (d. 180/796) equal to Ḥammād and preferable to both 'Abd al-Wāhid b. Ziyād al-Thaqafī (d. 176/792) and Wuhayb b. Khālid.¹³⁵ Finally, Ḥammād b. Salama (d. 167/784), a maternal nephew of Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl, was evaluated as the best transmitter from Thābit al-Bunānī by Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal,¹³⁶ and Ibn Sa'd makes explicit references to two transmitters of his books (*aṣnāf*) in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.¹³⁷

The generation of Mālik, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Shu'ba introduced the disciplines of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism to Islamic civilization.¹³⁸ The dedicated pupils of al-Zuhri, Abū Ishāq al-Sab'ī,

¹³³ These six master teachers were al-Zuhri, 'Amr b. Dīnār, Abū Ishāq al-Sab'ī, al-A'mash, Qatāda, and Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr; Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, VIII, 256–7. A unique report on the authority of al-Marrūdhī cites Ibn Ḥanbal's evaluation of Ma'mar as *ṭabī illā anna fī ba'di ḥadīthihi shay'an*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, III, 381. Motzki has discovered that about 32% of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* is derived from Ma'mar's reports (excluding the *kitāb al-maghāzī* and *kitāb al-jāmi'*, which are almost exclusively Ma'mar reports), and that 28% of Ma'mar's material purports to come from al-Zuhri, 25% from Qatāda, and 11% from Ayyūb; *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 57–9.

¹³⁴ Al-Dūrī, *Tārikh*, II, 192 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 39–43. Ibn Sa'd transmits 'Affān b. Muslim's warning that scholars should not trust any *ḥadīth* from Qatāda in which Sa'id does not say *ḥaddathanā*; TK 2001, IX, 273. Ibn al-Nadīm reports that Sa'id composed a *Kitāb al-sunan*; *Fihrist*, 283. Sa'id's transmission of Qatāda's exegetical comments on the Qur'an is cited nearly 3060 times by al-Tabarī and is by far the most frequently cited *isnād* in his *tafsīr*; see Horst, 301–2.

¹³⁵ Al-Dārimī, *Tārikh*, 54–5. Ibn Sa'd evaluates 'Abd al-Wārith as *ṭhiqa-ḥujja*, 'Abd al-Wāhid as *ṭhiqa*, and Wuhayb as *ṭhiqa-ḥujja*; TK 2001, IX, 288–90. Ibn Ḥanbal also has positive things to say about these three pupils of Ayyūb; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 392–5 and IV, 103.

¹³⁶ Al-Dūrī, *Tārikh*, II, 207 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, I, 297–302. In another report in 'Abdullāh's *ʿIlal*, Ibn Ḥanbal declares that Ḥammād has transmitted the most material from three scholars: Thābit, Ḥumayd [al-Ṭawīl], and Hishām b. 'Urwa; *ibid*.

¹³⁷ TK 2001, IX, 282. These transmitters were 'Ubayd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ḥaḥṣ and Ibrāhīm b. Abī Suwayd. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions a *Kitāb al-sunan* attributed to Ḥammād; *Fihrist*, 283.

¹³⁸ The evidence for this claim is presented above in chapter four.

al-A'mash, Qatāda, and Ayyūb served as both transmitters and organizers of their teachers' vast repertoire of prophetic and post-prophetic material. Ibn al-Nadīm reports no fewer than seven books titled *Kitāb al-sunan* during this time, all of which appear to have been the earliest systematic efforts to arrange transmitted materials according to legal categories, such as ritual purity, prayer, and inheritance.¹³⁹ The collapse of Medina, due largely to the emergence of a significant percentage of prolific, yet unreliable, *ḥadīth* transmitters, and the dispersion of al-Zuhri's disciples, was more than compensated for by the *ḥadīth* renaissance of Kufa and the continuous acumen of Basran scholars. It is worth noting that the prominence of *ḥadīth* scholarship in Basra was accompanied by the absence of the materialization of a school of *fiqh*, as Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī identifies only Sawwār b. 'Abdullāh al-Qāḍī and 'Ubayd Allāh b. al-Ḥasan al-'Anazī (d. 168/784) as jurists in this city during this time.¹⁴⁰ While several scholars, like Mālik, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Ḥasan b. Ḥayy, maintained a high degree of proficiency in both the disciplines of *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*, the divorce between these two branches of Islamic knowledge appears to have become mildly pronounced in the generation prior to al-Shāfi'ī's efforts to negotiate a reconciliation between them. The stage was set by the efforts of the *ḥadīth* scholars, some of whose relationships I have just outlined, for the final transformations of *ḥadīth* transmission that were realized by their students: the birth of multiple small, remote *ḥadīth* centers, the rise of Syria, and the book market of Baghdad.

VIII.6 *The refinement of ḥadīth compilation and criticism: The generation who died 180–220/796–835*

Almost all of the *ḥadīth* scholars who flourished under the early 'Abbāsids were teachers of the men of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal. The trend of book compilation continued into this period, as Ibn al-Nadīm identifies over a dozen books

that were published by men of this generation, most of which were arranged by legal topics (*sunan*) or were Qur'ānic commentaries. The scholars of Basra and Kufa, many of whom were disciples of Shu'ba and Sufyān al-Thawrī, continued to develop both the arts of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism initiated by their teachers. A new trend at this time was the blossoming of satellite towns and cities, each of which housed a small number of highly competent *ḥadīth* scholars whose material was prized by the following generation of compilers. Syria also reemerged as a vibrant center of *ḥadīth* scholarship. The final transformation of this period was the dramatic arrival of the Baghdādī book market, something that can be gleaned from *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* and Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist*. While Baghdad appears to have eclipsed Kufa and perhaps even Basra during the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal,¹⁴¹ it is important to bear in mind that it was still a junior partner to the two well established Iraqi *amṣār*, whose native *ḥadīth* scholars were unrivaled in the Islamic community.

Basra remained the primary engine of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism down to the end of the second/eighth century and into the third/ninth one. The extraordinary importance of Yahyā b. Sa'id al-Qaṭṭān (d. 198/813) and his younger friend 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/814), both of whom were disciples of Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shu'ba, has been demonstrated in the fourth and seventh chapters of this study. Yazīd b. Zuray' (d. 182/798), whom Ibn Sa'd identifies as a highly reliable *ḥadīth* scholar with 'Uthmānī sympathies, was a prominent pupil of Shu'ba, and Ibn Ma'in considered his transmission of material from Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba to be superior to that Ibn 'Ulayya's material from him.¹⁴² Both Ibn 'Ulayya (d. 193/809), who read the books of Ibn Jurayj and studied with Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī,¹⁴³ and the most authoritative disciple of Ḥammād b.

¹⁴¹ See above, V.2.5.

¹⁴² ṬK 2001, IX, 290; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 213. Recall that Ibn Ḥanbal referred to Yazīd as the "sweet scent (*rayḥāna*, literally sweet basil) of Basra"; see above, Table 7.6. Yazīd is also the transmitter of Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba's voluminous collection of Qatāda's exegetical comments found throughout al-Ṭabarī's *tafsīr* that was mentioned above in note 135.

¹⁴³ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 67 and II, 169. Ibn Sa'd held the octogenarian Ibn 'Ulayya to be *thiqa-thabt-ḥujja*, and Ibn Ḥanbal reports that he had an attractive book that contained 400 reports from Ibn 'Awn, 900 *ḥadīth* from Yūnus b. 'Ubayd, and an undisclosed number from Ayyūb; ṬK 2001, IX, 327–8 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 96. Ibn Ḥanbal, who mentions that he studied with Ibn 'Ulayya in

¹³⁹ The following scholars are identified by Ibn al-Nadīm as composers of books entitled *Kitāb al-sunan*: Ibn Abī Dhī'b (d. 159/776, Medina), Ibn Jurayj, Zā'ida b. Qudāma, Yahyā b. Zakariyyā b. Abī Zā'ida (d. 182/798, *qāḍī* of al-Madā'in), Sa'id b. Abī 'Arūba, Ḥammād b. Salama, and al-Awzā'ī; *Fihrist*, 281–4.

¹⁴⁰ Abū Ishāq, *Ṭabaqāt al-fuqahā'*, 91.

Salama, 'Affān b. Muslim (d. 220/835),¹⁴⁴ left their native homes of Basra to settle in Baghdad, and contributed to its rapid rise as a center of *ḥadīth* transmission. Other major pupils of Shu'ba, such as Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī (d. 203/819), Ghundar Muḥammad b. Ja'far (d. 194/810), and 'Amr b. Marzūq al-Bāhilī (d. 214/829),¹⁴⁵ appear to have remained in Basra, where they were sought out by the likes of Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal. Finally, Bahz b. Asad (d. 197/813), whom Ibn Sa'd identifies as a very reliable and prolific transmitter,¹⁴⁶ was regarded extremely highly by his contemporary Ibn Mahdī and taught *ḥadīth* he obtained from Shu'ba and Ḥammād b. Salama to Qutayba b. Sa'īd and Ibn Ḥanbal.¹⁴⁷

Kufan *ḥadīth* scholars during the late second and early third centuries consisted primarily of pupils of al-A'mash and companions of Sufyān al-Thawrī.¹⁴⁸ The Murjī' transmitter Abū Mu'āwiya al-Ḍarīr (d. 195/811) is reported to have been more sound than the Basran Jarīr b. Ḥāzim (d. 170/786) with respect to material from al-A'mash, despite the fact that he forgot a quarter of the 1600 *ḥadīth* that he acquired from this scholar during a period of illness.¹⁴⁹ One of the

Baghdad in 181/797, also reports that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān preferred Ibn 'Ulayya to Wuhayb b. Khālīd, whereas Ibn Mahdī preferred Wuhayb; *ibid.*, I, 94–99. Ibn 'Ulayya's full name is Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm b. Miqṣam.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 221. Ibn Ma'in reports a quote of 'Affān that "there is not a single *ḥadīth* that I heard during the sessions of Ḥammād b. Salama that I did not bring to his house and read to him in person" *mā samī'tu min Ḥammād ibn Salama ḥadīthan fī l-majlis illā ataytuhu ilā manzilihi hattā aqra'ahu 'alayhi*; *ibid.*, I, 350. Ibn Sa'd grades 'Affān as *thiqa-thabt-hujja* and Ibn Ḥanbal was of the opinion that 'Affān had the best versions of Shu'ba's *ḥadīth*; TK 2001, IX, 300 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 13–15. Ibn Ḥanbal considers 'Affān to be superior to Ibn Mahdī, and mentions that he studied with 'Affān in Baghdad for a decade; *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ TK 2001, IX, 299 (Abū Dāwūd); 297 (Ghundar); and 306 ('Amr).

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Sa'd graded him *thiqa-hujja*; TK 2001, IX, 299.

¹⁴⁷ *Al-Jarh wa l-ta'dīl*, II, 431. Abū Ḥātim calls Bahz Imām, *ṣadūq*, *thiqa*.

¹⁴⁸ Nineteen Kufans of the seventh and eighth *ṭabaqāt* are reported by Ibn Sa'd to have transmitted 'many *ḥadīth*' and to have been reliable.

¹⁴⁹ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 387 (Jarīr) and 276 (memory loss). Ibn Sa'd graded Abū Mu'āwiya, whose name is Muḥammad b. Khāzim, as *thiqa*, despite his acknowledged propensity for *tadlīs* and his inclusion among the Murjī'a; TK 2001, VIII, 515. Ibn Sa'd also reports that Wakī' did not attend his funeral, for reasons that are not identified. Ibn Ma'in also held Abū Mu'āwiya to be *thiqa*, although Ibn Ḥanbal noted that he was "inconsistent" (*muḍṭarīb*) except with respect to al-A'mash's material, and that he made many errors in everything that he transmitted; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 53, 187 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 257–8. Ibn Ma'in reports that Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān considered Jarīr b. Ḥāzim to be *thiqa*, an opinion that he shared with his teacher, while Ibn Ḥanbal adds to his grade of *thiqa* by describing Jarīr as *ṣāhib sunna*; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 115, 266 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, I, 189–92.

longer-lived pupils of al-A'mash of this time was Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh (d. 193/809),¹⁵⁰ although he was far inferior to the master Kufan *ḥadīth* scholar of his day, Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197/813).¹⁵¹ Wakī' studied with Ibn 'Awn after al-A'mash passed away,¹⁵² boasted that every *ḥadīth* he wrote down from Sufyān al-Thawrī had been memorized initially,¹⁵³ and habitually read *ḥadīth* from his books to his students, a practice that was adopted by his admiring pupil, Ibn Ḥanbal.¹⁵⁴ Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn (d. 219/834) was another highly-respected pupil of both al-A'mash and Sufyān al-Thawrī,¹⁵⁵ and five of the second-tier companions of Sufyān al-Thawrī in the eyes of Ibn Ma'in were graded as either *thiqa-ṣadūq* or *ṣadūq* by Ibn Sa'd, and flourished alongside their more illustrious contemporaries in Kufa.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ TK 2001, VIII, 508. Ibn Sa'd grades Abū Bakr as *thiqa-ṣadūq* but remarks that he made many errors (*ghalaṭ*). He also observes that he was particularly pious (*min al-ubbād*). Ibn Ma'in merely mentions that he was inferior to Abū l-Aḥwaṣ (whom Ibn Sa'd grades as *ṣāliḥ*); al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 272 and TK 2001, VIII, 500. Ibn Ḥanbal is reported to have graded Abū Bakr as *ṣadūq*, *thiqa*, *ṣāhib Qur'ān wa khayr*; *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, IV, 193–5. Recall that al-Dhahabī identified Abū Bakr as a Shaykh al-Islam in *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*; see above, III.3.

¹⁵¹ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 341. Wakī' is reported to have selected carefully from Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh's *ḥadīth*.

¹⁵² Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, II, 190. Ibn Ma'in reports elsewhere that Wakī' accumulated 800 *ḥadīth* from al-A'mash; *ibid.*, I, 276.

¹⁵³ *mā katabtu 'an al-Thawrī ḥadīthan qatṭu kuntu aḥfazuhu idhā raja'tu ilā l-manzili katabtulu*; *ibid.*, I, 229.

¹⁵⁴ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 351. Ibn Ma'in also reports that he witnessed Wakī' reading from a book entitled *Kitāb al-zuhd* and refused to recite to his students Ibn 'Umar's *ḥadīth* "be a stranger in this world" *kun fī l-dunyā ka'annaka gharībun aw 'ābir sabīl*; *ibid.*, I, 411. This *Kitāb al-zuhd* might be the same text as the 1994 *Kitāb al-zuhd* attributed to Wakī' published in Riyadh; see above IV.4.7. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions a *Kitāb al-sunan* attributed to Wakī'; *Fihrist*, 283. For a reference to his *Muṣannaf*, see below, note 181.

¹⁵⁵ Both Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal grade Abū Nu'aym as *thiqa-hujja*; TK 2001, VIII, 523–4 and *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 151–4. Ibn Ma'in and Ibn al-Madīnī consider Abū Nu'aym among the best companions of Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī observed that Abū Nu'aym accurately memorized 3500 *ḥadīth* of al-Thawrī and 500 *ḥadīth* of Miṣ'ar b. Kidām; *al-Jarh wa l-ta'dīl*, VII, 61–2. Al-Bukhārī included 175 *ḥadīth* from Abū Nu'aym in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 237 (#96). Sixty-two of these *ḥadīth* trace back to Sufyān al-Thawrī. Ibn al-Nadīm mentions a *Kitāb al-manāsik* and a *Kitāb al-mas'āl fī l-fiqh* attributed to Abū Nu'aym; *Fihrist*, 283.

¹⁵⁶ These five scholars were 'Ubayd Allāh b. Mūsā, Abū Aḥmad al-Zubayrī, Yahyā b. 'Ādam, Mu'āwiya b. Hishām, and Qabīṣa b. 'Uqba; TK 2001, VIII, 522, 526, 527. Note that Ibn Sa'd grades Yahyā slightly higher than these other men and observes that 'Ubayd Allāh had more material from Isrā'īl b. Yūnus than anyone of his age and that he was a master Qur'ān reciter in his mosque. See above, VII.3 for further references.

Finally, 'Abdullāh b. Idrīs (d. 192/808), Abū Usāma Ḥammād b. Usāma (d. 201/816), and Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd al-Ṭanāfīsī (d. 204/819), were reliable and prolific transmitters who all received the tantalizing sectarian affiliation *ṣāhib sunna wa jamā'a* from Ibn Sa'd.¹⁵⁷

Several new and exciting centers of *ḥadīth* transmission sprouted during the high 'Abbāsīd caliphate. While some scholars, like the peripatetic Ibn al-Mubārak, refused to be tethered to any particular town for too long a period of time, the majority of adventuresome *ḥadīth* folk ultimately settled in one or another location.¹⁵⁸ 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 211/826) and Hishām b. Yūsuf (d. 197/813) established Ṣan'ā' as one of the most prestigious cities for *ḥadīth* in the Islamic world for roughly half a century, largely due to the fact that their teacher Ma'mar b. Rāshid lived there for the last twenty years of his life, as well as the massive amount of material they collected from Ibn Jurayj, Sufyān al-Thawrī, and Ibn 'Uyayna.¹⁵⁹ Palestine received a boost with the arrival of Shu'ba's master pupil, Ādam b. Abī Iyās (d. 220/835), in 'Asqalān, and Sufyān al-Thawrī's disciple Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Firyābī (d. 212/827) in Qisāriya (Caesarea).¹⁶⁰ The city of Wāsiṭ boasted Hushaym b. Bashīr (d. 183/799), who eventually settled in Baghdad, and Yazīd b. Hārūn (d. 206/821), who

¹⁵⁷ TK 2001, VIII, 511, 517, 520. Ibn Ma'in evaluates Ibn Idrīs and Abū Usāma as *thiqa*, and al-Dūrī reports that Ibn Ma'in would "only speak well" of Muḥammad al-Ṭanāfīsī; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 52, 92 and al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 353. Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion of Ibn Idrīs and al-Ṭanāfīsī is slightly less positive than that of Ibn Ma'in, although he declares Abū Usāma to be *thabt ṣāhib al-kutāb*; see *Mawsū'at aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad*, II, 227–8 (Ibn Idrīs), I, 293–4 (Abū Usāma) and III, 292–3 (al-Ṭanāfīsī).

¹⁵⁸ Ibn al-Mubārak is praised by Ibn Sa'd as Imām, *thiqa-ḥujja*; TK 2001, IX, 376. See above, IV, 4.6, for a discussion of his role in *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism. An edition of his famous book *Kutāb al-zuhd wa l-raqā'iq* was present in Qayrawān prior to the end of the third/ninth century; Murānī, *Beiträge*, 74. This book has been published, and appears to contain a modest number of *ḥadīth* with complete *isnāds*.

¹⁵⁹ TK 2001, VIII, 108. The significance of 'Abd al-Razzāq's *Muṣannaf* for the reconstruction of the first two centuries of Islam cannot be overestimated and has been demonstrated by Motzki's *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, for a biography of the compiler, see *ibid.*, 62–8. Recall that the value of the *ḥadīth* of 'Abd al-Razzāq and Hishām inspired Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal to make the arduous journey from Baghdad to Yemen.

¹⁶⁰ TK 2001, IX, 496 (Ādam); 495 (al-Firyābī). Al-Dhahabī identifies al-Firyābī's city of residence as Caesarea and notes that he died just prior to Ibn Ḥanbal's trip to see him; *Tadhkira*, I, 275–6. Ibn al-Nadīm reports the existence of a Qur'ānic exegesis of al-Firyābī, as well as various books of *fiqh*; *Fihrist*, 285. Al-Bukhārī included 281 *ḥadīth* from Ādam in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 137 of which were transmitted by Shu'ba; Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 217 (#33).

counted Sulaymān al-Taymī, Ḥumayd al-Ṭawīl, and three of Sufyān al-Thawrī's "four *ḥuffāz*" among his teachers.¹⁶¹ Finally, Ibn 'Uyayna and his disciple, 'Abdullāh b. al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219/834), elevated the thriving Meccan *ḥadīth* scene, which received another boost from the influx of prolific pious *ḥadīth* scholars, such as al-Fuḍayl b. 'Iyād (d. 187/803), 'Abdullāh b. Rajā' (d. about 190/805), and Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Muqrī (d. 213/828), who chose to live their final years in the holiest city of Islamdom.¹⁶²

One of the more spectacular transformations of this period was the rise of Syria as a major *ḥadīth* center. One reason for this change was the steady stream of proficient *ḥadīth* scholars who came to the frontier era in order to wage war (or encourage others to do so) against the Byzantines. While this raiding was a part of official 'Abbāsīd policy, it appears as though the erudite *ḥadīth* folk who settled in Maṣṣīṣa and other frontier areas may have been following the example of the ascetic Ibn al-Mubārak, rather than the caliph Hārūn. Maṣṣīṣa housed Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī (d. 185/801), who, despite his habit of making many errors in his *ḥadīth*, was considered by Ibn Sa'd as a *ṣāhib sunna*.¹⁶³ Muḥammad b. Kathīr (d. 210/825), a native Syrian, brought his trove of materials from al-Awzā'ī and Ma'mar to Maṣṣīṣa, and Makhlad b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 191/807), a Basran,

¹⁶¹ TK 2001, IX, 315 (Hushaym) and 316 (Yazīd). These three teachers are Yahyā l-Anṣārī, Ismā'il b. Abī Khālid, and 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān. Ibn Ḥanbal described Yazīd as *ḥāfiẓ mutqin li-l-ḥadīth*, while Ibn Ma'in and Ibn al-Madīnī called him *thiqa*; Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, IX, 295. Ibn al-Nadīm reports a *Kutāb al-farā'id* attributed to Yazīd; *Fihrist*, 284.

¹⁶² Ibn 'Uyayna has been discussed in some detail above, IV.4.5. Ibn Ma'in considered him to be the preeminent pupil of 'Amr b. Dīnār; al-Dārimī, *Tārīkh*, 55–6. Ibn Sa'd considered al-Ḥumaydī to be *thiqa* although Ibn Ma'in refused to take *ḥadīth* from the latter due to his lack of scrutiny (*yatasahhal*); TK 2001, VIII, 63 and al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 99. Note that al-Ḥumaydī's *Musnad* contains 1300 *ḥadīth* and was edited in two volumes by Ḥabīb al-Raḥmān al-A'zamī in 1963. Al-Bukhārī included 33 *ḥadīth* from al-Ḥumaydī in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 27 of which are attributed to Ibn 'Uyayna; Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 213 (#19). Ibn Sa'd reports that al-Fuḍayl, 'Abdullāh b. Rajā', and Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān all transmitted many *ḥadīth* and were reliable scholars; TK 2001, VIII, 61–2. Al-Fuḍayl came from Khurāsān, while the later two men were Basrans. Al-Bukhārī includes only 12 *ḥadīth* from Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*; Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 213 (#17).

¹⁶³ TK 2001, IX, 494. His full name was Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad and his *Kutāb al-siyar* has been published; Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī, *Kutāb al-siyar*, ed. Fārūq Ḥammāda (Beirut, 1987). Ibn 'Uyayna called him an Imām, Ibn Maḥdī praised his *ḥadīth* from al-Mughīra [b. Miqṣam al-Ḍabbī], and Ibn Ma'in said *thiqa thiqa*; Ibn Abī Ḥatīm, *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, II, 128–9.

added a pile of transmissions from Hishām b. Ḥassān to the mix.¹⁶⁴ Ibn Maʿīn is reported to have considered ʿAbdullāh b. Yūsuf al-Kalāʿī's (d. 218/833) recension of the *Muwattaʿa* as the most reliable version of Mālik's book and al-Bukhārī identified him as one of the most reliable Syrians.¹⁶⁵ Finally, three *ḥadīth* scholars of Ḥimṣ and Damascus, two of whom were plagued with charges of deceitful transmission,¹⁶⁶ contributed greatly to the rehabilitation of these old cities of Syria that had once been home to the *ṣaḥāba* Muʿādh b. Jabal and Abū l-Dardāʾ.

The most vibrant center for the transmission of *ḥadīth* at the turn of the third century may have been the royal capital of Baghdad. We have seen how certain individuals, especially Medinans like Hishām b. ʿUrwa, Ibn Ishāq, Ibn Abī l-Zinād, and Ibrāhīm b. Saʿd, had been lured to Baghdad with lucrative jobs or other enticements, and it appears that the *ḥadīth*-folk reached a critical mass in this city only during the following generation. Hushaym b. Bashīr, Ibn Ḥanbal's first significant *ḥadīth* teacher, immigrated from Wāsiṭ, Qirāḍ Abū Nūḥ came from Basra with a wealth of material from Shuʿba,¹⁶⁷ and Ibn ʿUlayya arrived with exceptional familiarity with the books of Ibn Jurayj.¹⁶⁸ A final Basran arrival in Baghdad, whom we have already encountered, was ʿAffān b. Muslim, and it is clear that Ibn Saʿd took advantage of his neighbor from the fact that much of his Ḥammād b. Ṣalama material related to the *ṣaḥāba* cited in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* was obtained from this prestigious scholar.

¹⁶⁴ TK 2001, IX, 495. Makhlad's mother was a wife of Hishām b. Ḥassān, an expert in the *ḥadīth* of Ibn Sirīn.

¹⁶⁵ Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, X, 357–8. In one version of this report, Ibn Maʿīn professes the superiority of the *Muwattaʿa*'s of both al-Kalāʿī and al-Qaʿnabī. Al-Bukhārī included 335 *ḥadīth* from ʿAbdullāh b. Yūsuf in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 272 of which came from Mālik and 57 of which came from al-Layth b. Saʿd; Sezgin, *Buhārī'nin Kaynakları*, 212 (#18). Note that al-Kalāʿī ranks second, after Musaddad, in the list of al-Bukhārī's most frequently cited sources in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

¹⁶⁶ Al-Walīd b. Muslim (d. 194/810) and Baqīyya b. al-Walīd (d. 197/813) were both guilty of engaging in much *tadlīs*; TK 2001, IX, 474–5. Ibn al-Nadīm reports the existence of a *Kitāb al-sunan fi l-fiqh* and *Kitāb al-maghāzī* for al-Walīd; *al-Fihrist*, 284. The third major Syrian was Abū Mushir ʿAbd al-Aʿlā, the *qāḍī* of Damascus who died in prison in 218/833 as a result of the *miḥna*; *ibid.*, IX, 479.

¹⁶⁷ TK 2001, IX, 337.

¹⁶⁸ TK 2001, IX, 327–8; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 67. Ibn Maʿīn also mentions that Ibn ʿUlayya was inferior to Ḥammād b. Zayd with respect to Ayyūb, something that is hardly surprising given his opinion that nobody was more erudite with Ayyūb's material than Ḥammād; *ibid.*, II, 169.

Ibn Ḥanbal distinguished three unparalleled "Companions of *ḥadīth*" of his day in Baghdad, the most precise of whom was Abū Kāmil Muzaḥfar b. Mudrik (d. 207/822).¹⁶⁹ Al-Haytham b. Jamīl (d. 213/828) was considered by Ibn Ḥanbal to have had the most *ḥadīth* memorized among these three scholars, and al-Dhahabī reports that he went bankrupt twice in the course of his insatiable quest for *ḥadīth*.¹⁷⁰ The third member of this trio, Abū Salama Maṣṣūr b. Salama al-Khuzāʿī, was reported by Ibn Saʿd to have been reluctant to teach *ḥadīth*, then succumbed for a few days, and finally moved to Maṣṣīṣa in 210/825.¹⁷¹ These three scholars not only contributed to the *ḥadīth* culture of Baghdad but also, if the anecdotal evidence is correct, played a major role in the education of Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal with respect to *isnād* analysis.¹⁷²

One of the most significant developments for the discipline of *ḥadīth* transmission in Baghdad was the emergence of the book market. Ibn Saʿd identifies several transmitters of books in his day, all of whom he could have met in person. Yaḥyā b. Saʿīd b. Abān (d. 194/810) transmitted both the *Maghāzī* of Ibn Ishāq as well as many *ḥadīth* of al-Aʿmash.¹⁷³ Saʿd b. Ibrāhīm b. Saʿd (d. 201/816), a *qāḍī* for Hārūn al-Rashīd, transmitted his father's books, while his brother, Yaʿqub (d. 208/823) transmitted his father's recension of Ibn Ishāq's *Maghāzī*.¹⁷⁴ The *Maghāzī* of Abū Maʿshar was available from Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. Bahrām, who also distributed the *Tafsīr* of Shaybān b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān that Ibn Maʿīn considered inferior to the similar work of Saʿīd b. Abī ʿArūba.¹⁷⁵ Saʿīd's books were available from

¹⁶⁹ This report is from the *ʿIlal* and can be found in *Mawsūʿat aqwāl al-Imām Ahmad* in each of the three men's entries: Abū Kāmil (III, 363); al-Haytham b. Jamīl (IV, 72); and Abū Salama Maṣṣūr b. Salama (III, 399). Al-Dhahabī mentions that Ibn Maʿīn learned how to scrutinize *ḥadīth* from Abū Kāmil; *Tadhkira*, I, 262.

¹⁷⁰ *Tadhkira*, I, 262. Al-Haytham's teachers included Ḥammād b. Salama, Mālik, al-Layth b. Saʿd, and Zuhayr b. Muʿāwiya; he left Baghdad at some point to settle in Antioch, and thus contributed to the *ḥadīth* florescence in the frontier lands during this time. A less positive effect of this move was that his *ḥadīth* are found only in the *Sunan* of Ibn Māja out of the six Sunnī books.

¹⁷¹ TK 2001, IX, 348.

¹⁷² I have just mentioned Abū Kāmil's role in the education of Ibn Maʿīn; al-Dāraquṭnī is quoted as stating that both Ibn Maʿīn and Ibn Ḥanbal learned the discipline of *isnād* criticism (*ʿilm al-rijāl*) from Abū Salama, presumable prior to his departure from Baghdad in 210/825; *Tadhkira*, I, 263.

¹⁷³ TK 2001, VIII, 520 and IX, 341.

¹⁷⁴ TK 2001, IX, 345.

¹⁷⁵ TK 2001, IX, 340.

‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. ‘Aṭā’ al-‘Ijlī,¹⁷⁶ and it is quite likely that his *tafsīr* was a critical component of ‘Abd al-Wahhāb’s own *tafsīr*, identified in the *Fihrist*.¹⁷⁷ Sufyān al-Thawrī’s *Jāmi‘* was available from his disciple ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Ubayd al-Rahmān al-Ashja‘ī (d. 182/798),¹⁷⁸ although Ibn Ma‘īn states that he obtained this book from ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Mūsā (d. 213/828) in Kufa.¹⁷⁹ Zā‘ida b. Qudāma’s writings could be procured from Mu‘āwiya b. ‘Amr al-Azdī (d. 214/829), who was also a disseminator of Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī’s *Kitāb al-siyar*.¹⁸⁰ Finally, the *Muṣannaf* of Wakī‘ was available from the bookseller (*al-warrāq*) al-‘Abbās b. Ghālib (d. 233/848),¹⁸¹ a contemporary of Ibn Sa’d who actually outlived him, and whose inclusion in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* may have been the work of Ibn Fahm or al-Ḥārith b. Abī Usāma.

The fifth, and final period of *ḥadīth* transmission in this narrative brings the material to the teachers of the books I have subjected to investigation in this and the two preceding chapters. Ibn Sa’d drew liberally upon the knowledge of ‘Affān b. Muslim, Abū Nu‘aym, Muḥammad al-Ṭanāfīsī, Wakī‘ b. al-Jarrāh, and, of course al-Wāqidī, all of whom he met in person. Ibn Ḥanbal included much material from the Iraqis Wakī‘, Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd al-Qaṭṭān, ‘Affān b. Muslim, and Yazīd b. Hārūn in his *Musnad*, and his journey with Ibn Ma‘īn to San‘ā’ to acquire copious written materials from ‘Abd al-Razzāq and Hishām b. Yūsuf makes sense in light of the decimation of the caliber of *ḥadīth* compilation in the Ḥijāz that occurred during the previous period.¹⁸² The discovery of the dominance of the *ḥadīth*

¹⁷⁶ TK 2001, IX, 335.

¹⁷⁷ *Fihrist*, 284. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb is credited here as well with a *Kitāb al-sunan fi l-fiqh* and a *Kitāb al-nāsikh wa l-mansūkh*.

¹⁷⁸ TK 2001, IX, 330. ‘Ubayd Allāh is also listed among the seventh *ṭabaqa* of the Kufans; *ibid.*, VIII, 514. Ibn al-Nadīm lists al-Ashja‘ī among the transmitters of al-Thawrī’s *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaḥīḥ* but not his *al-Jāmi‘ al-kabīr*; *Fihrist*, 281.

¹⁷⁹ See above, VII.3, note 62. This finding is interesting, since we observed in the previous chapter that Ibn Ma‘īn considered al-Ashja‘ī to be a superior scholar to ‘Ubayd Allāh b. Mūsā. Recall too, that al-Tirmidhī acquired the legal opinions of Sufyān al-Thawrī from the scribe of the Kufan ‘Ubayd Allāh (see above, III.3, note 15).

¹⁸⁰ TK 2001, IX, 343.

¹⁸¹ TK 2001, IX, 366.

¹⁸² The most prominent disciples of Mālik alive in Medina at this time were Ma‘īn b. ‘Īsā (d. 198/814), whom Ibn Sa’d grades *thiqa-thabt*; ‘Abdullāh b. Nāfi‘ al-Ṣā‘igh (d. 206/821) whom Ibn Sa’d declares was inferior to (*dūn*) Ma‘īn; and, perhaps, Muṭarrif b. ‘Abdullāh (d. 220/835), whom Ibn Sa’d grades as *thiqa*; TK, VII, 615–16. Abū Ḥatīm preferred Ma‘īn to ‘Abdullāh al-Ṣā‘igh and declared that Ma‘īn was the most reliable (*awṭhaq*) member of Mālik’s companions; *al-Jarh wa l-ta‘dīl*, VIII, 278.

scholars of Basra, Kufa, and Baghdad in the fifth chapter of this study is consistent with the findings of this chapter based upon *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, al-Dūrī’s *Tārīkh*, and Ibn Ḥanbal’s identification of the three original *Aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* in Baghdad.

The rise in sophistication of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism, manifest in the work of Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān and the book market of Baghdad, was also matched by the qualitative improvements in the realm of jurisprudence, as this was the age of the great Ḥanafī authorities Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī and al-Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf. It is quite informative that Ibn Sa’d acknowledges the *ḥadīth* erudition of these two men, and yet declares that it became spoiled due to their contacts with the *ra’y* of Abū Ḥanīfa.¹⁸³ The circulation of so many *ḥadīth* books arranged according to legal topics (*kutub al-sunan* or *farā’id*) at this time indicates that there was never any absolute divorce between experts in *fiqh* and those in *ḥadīth*, but, rather, the dispute was clearly over the religious authority of individual reasoning (*ra’y*), something in which the *ḥadīth* folk did not place much confidence *when undertaken by disciples of Abū Ḥanīfa*.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, there do not appear to have been complaints over Mālik’s or Sufyān al-Thawrī’s use of independent reasoning at this time, and even al-Dūrī provides several examples of Ibn Ma‘īn’s opinions on the topics of hunting, and, in particular, prayer, in his *Tārīkh*.¹⁸⁵ The message from these sources by the articulators of Sunnī Islam is unambiguous—the authoritative Muslim teachers must combine the qualities of *ḥadīth* erudition, reliable transmission, and a somewhat strict avoidance of the opinions of Abū Ḥanīfa and his disciples. How and when Abū Ḥanīfa became a Sunnī authority in the eyes of *ḥadīth* scholars is outside the scope of this book; what is clear is that his disciples were not welcome by Ibn Sa’d and his contemporaries.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ TK 2001, IX, 332, 338.

¹⁸⁴ Ibn Sa’d’s comment concerning Mu‘allā b. Manṣūr, a Baghdadī scholar associated in other sources with the teachings of Abū Ḥanīfa, is illustrative of this point: “some *ḥadīth* scholars transmit from him, and some do not transmit *ra’y* from him;” TK 2001, IX, 344 and Melchert, “How Ḥanafism came to Originate in Kufa and Traditionalism in Medina,” 329–30.

¹⁸⁵ Al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 94, 338; II, 176–7, 181. Recall Ibn Ma‘īn’s explicit approval of the *ra’y* of Sufyān al-Thawrī and Mālik; see above, VII.3, note 59.

¹⁸⁶ Note also Ibn Abī Shayba’s *al-Radd ‘alā Abī Ḥanīfa*, included in the published edition of his *Muṣannaf*, which rejects roughly 120 legal opinions of Abū Ḥanīfa on the basis of *ḥadīth* and *āthār*; *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fi l-aḥādīth wa l-āthār*, VII, 276–326.

One particularly conspicuous absence from the discussion of this period is, of course, Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī. Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in appear to ignore him, if they even knew him, and the references to him in the *ʿIlal* indicate Ibn Ḥanbal's admiration of his rhetorical capabilities, rather than his legal acumen.¹⁸⁷ While it is true that prior to the mid-third/ninth century the majority of the material found in the *sunan* books was *not* prophetic reports and consisted instead of *ṣaḥābī* and *tābi'ī āthār*, there still must have been a substantial body of *ḥadīth* in circulation prior to the date of al-Shāfi'ī's composition of the *Risāla* (around the year 200/820). The reason why Mālik had only a modest number of prophetic *ḥadīth* in his *Muwatta'* and Ibn Ḥanbal included about 30,000 *ḥadīth* in his *Musnad* was not necessarily due to an explosion of *ḥadīth* fabrication, as is insinuated by Juynboll,¹⁸⁸ but, rather, due partly to the rapid decline of Medina as a center for *ḥadīth* transmission and the whims of the various compilers of his book. Had Mālik actually left his beloved city and visited Basra or Kufa (or even Ṣan'ā'), he may have been inclined to transmit even more *ḥadīth* than the hundreds that are found in the *Muwatta'* and other classic compilations.¹⁸⁹ The notion that al-Shāfi'ī stimulated a "*ḥadīth* revolution" is not even remotely supported by al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr or Ibn Ma'in's critical opinions,¹⁹⁰ both of which suggest strongly that al-Shāfi'ī merely articulated something that the

ḥadīth-folk long had known: the best source for the Prophet's practice (*sunna*) was the corpus of *ḥadīth*, passed from the *ṣaḥāba* to the *tābi'ūn*, from the *tābi'ūn* to the generation of al-Zuhrī, Ayyūb, and al-A'mash, and from this generation to the generation of Shu'ba, al-Thawrī, and Mālik, the latter whom of course, was a primary teacher of al-Shāfi'ī.¹⁹¹

VIII.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this skeletal narrative of the development of the first two centuries of *ḥadīth* scholarship has been to uncover the story behind the massive, and at times confusing, critical works by what may have been the first generation of Sunnī scholars. I have limited myself to the earliest available sources that depict both this history and the close correlation between the men whom Ibn Sa'd identifies as having transmitted many *ḥadīth* and those whom Ibn Ma'in identifies as being close to major scholars of each generation. I have made extensive use of Ibn Ḥajar's study of the *aṭrāf* of the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal because it sheds valuable light upon the relationships between the most prolific *ṣaḥāba* and their most influential *tābi'ūn* disciples that are only hinted at in al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr. Although this discussion has included quite a few names, it is important to realize that it includes only the elite transmitters of the first two centuries of Islam from among the thousands of men Ibn Sa'd and his contemporaries dutifully recorded in their books. Just as I endeavored to articulate al-Dhahabī's vision of the development of *ḥadīth* scholarship down to his day in the third chapter, I have done my utmost to be faithful to the historical vision of *ḥadīth* scholarship, as understood by Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, Ibn Ḥanbal, and other early articulators of Sunnī Islam in the third/ninth century. It is this critical historical vision, after all, that I argue lies at the core of the initial articulation of Sunnī Islam by the *ḥadīth* scholars of the third/ninth century.

¹⁸⁷ *Maṣū'at aqwāl al-Imām Aḥmad*, III, 232–5. Al-Shāfi'ī's role in the development of *ḥadīth* criticism is investigated above, IV.5.

¹⁸⁸ See Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition*, 28–9.

¹⁸⁹ Note that hundreds of *ḥadīth* transmitted by Mālik that were not included in the Yahyā l-Laythī edition of the *Muwatta'* can be found in the classical Sunnī compilations. One of the first scholars to thoroughly examine Mālik's myriad *ḥadīth* in many Eastern recensions of the *Muwatta'* was the Shaykh al-Islām al-Dāraquṭnī, whom we encountered above, III.5; see his slender book *Aḥādīth al-Muwatta' wa ittifaq al-ruwāt 'an Mālik wa ikhtilāfuhum fihā ziyādatan wa naqṣan*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kawthārī (no place, no date). Al-Dāraquṭnī notes that there are 565 *ḥadīth* in all of the recensions of the *Muwatta'*, 71 in some of the recensions, and 6 in which Mālik does not identify his source; *ibid.*, 37. See also Siddiqī, *Ḥadīth Literature*, 7–8.

¹⁹⁰ Motzki has come to a similar conclusion, on the basis of his sophisticated analysis of the *Muṣannaf* of 'Abd al-Razzāq: "The growth of the stock of traditions within and outside of the schools is not necessarily to be laid at the door—as Schacht assumes—of forgers opposed to the ancient schools and counter-forgers within schools... it has been possible to demonstrate that 'typical common links' like 'Amr b. Dīnār, Ibn Jurayj, and Ibn 'Uyayna are not generally to be considered as forgers or propagators of contemporary forgeries, as Schacht identified them." See *The Origins of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 297.

¹⁹¹ For an insightful reappraisal of the delayed influence of al-Shāfi'ī and his *Risāla*, see Wael Hallaq, "Was al-Shāfi'ī the Master Architect of Islamic Jurisprudence?"

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This study began with the hypothesis that the major *ḥadīth* scholars of the third/ninth century played a far greater role in the articulation of Sunnī Islam than did al-Shāfiʿī and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, two men traditionally associated with the crystallization of Sunnism. One of the primary reasons for my focus upon the *ḥadīth* scholars of this period is the historical fact that the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim have remained the most exalted books, after the Qurʾān, in the opinions of virtually all Sunnī scholars of the past twelve centuries, a feat unmatched by any legal or theological work found in the four primary schools of law or the three schools of theology associated with Sunnism.¹ How did these two books achieve this status? In order to answer this question, it was necessary to examine initially three related topics: 1) the long-term evolution of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship; 2) the rise of both *ḥadīth* and *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism during the three generations prior to al-Bukhārī and Muslim; and 3) the state of *ḥadīth* scholarship on the eve of these two compilers, which I have dubbed the generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal.

A narrative of the evolution of *ḥadīth* scholarship over its seven most vibrant centuries was the task of the second and third chapters, the aim of which was to provide a historical context for the most influential *ḥadīth* scholars and books in the Sunnī tradition. I relied heavily upon al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* for the seven-phase narrative of this tradition, and paid particular attention to the men whom he identified with the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām. Few scholars, if any, in Islamic civilization have devoted such an enormous amount of time and paper to the elucidation of the development of Sunnī *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism as al-Dhahabī, and I endeavored to make my presentation as faithful as possible to his critical eye. Two particularly important findings in these chapters were the dating of

¹ The three Sunnī schools of theology are the Ashʿarī, Mātūrīdī, and that of the *ḥadīth* folk, which, for lack of a better expression, is the one that opposes staunchly rational speculation on theological topics.

the first *ḥadīth* compilations to a full century prior to the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* and, secondly, the surprisingly high volume of compilation and criticism that occurred during the century *after* their production. This latter observation indicates that there was much material that fourth/tenth century scholars felt needed to be preserved that had not been included in the books of al-Bukhārī and his contemporaries, and that the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* represented a high watermark in the evolution of *ḥadīth* scholarship, but were not the culmination of this ubiquitous Sunnī tradition. It was also clear that a closer investigation of the sources composed during the generation of scholars who lived prior to al-Bukhārī and Muslim, as opposed to the Mamlūk days of al-Dhahabī, would be necessary to uncover exactly how this high watermark was reached, as well as to ascertain the fundamental assumptions upon which these books were built.

We inched closer to our goal of identifying the process by which Sunnism was articulated with an investigation of the origins of *ḥadīth* criticism in the fourth chapter. I reasoned that if my hypothesis that *ḥadīth* scholars played the major role in the shaping of Sunnī Islam was correct, then the critical disciplines constructed by the most prominent of these scholars must have exerted a major influence upon the nature of the core sources that were compiled according to their guidelines. The primary challenge was to isolate the earliest and most important designers of this craft, and to distinguish between the mere *ḥadīth* critics, such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, and the more specialized *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics, like Shu'ba, Mālik, and Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān. A particularly significant finding was that *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism was not applied on a vast scale until the generation immediately preceding al-Bukhārī and Muslim, which just so happened to be the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, the first group of critics whose opinions have been well preserved.

A thorough investigation of the nature of *ḥadīth* scholarship and its relationship to *literateurs*, theologians, ascetics, and jurists of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, was necessary due to the importance of these men upon the development of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism. Al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* provided a spectacular bird's eye view of the intellectual and religious life of the central lands of Islam during the first half of the third/ninth century, and depicted the preeminence of Iraqi scholars, along with the shift of the *ḥadīth* centers east to Khurāsān and even central Asia, from where all six of the canonical compilers emerged. The

florescence of book production was evident during this time, and my decision to label this period as the "generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal" was due to both the influence of these scholars in general upon *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism, as well as the accessibility of their opinions, which I subjected to rigorous analysis in Part II of this book.

One of the key assumptions that I have made in this study has been that the primary books that I investigated in Part II, namely Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*, the *ʿIlal* of 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad, and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, are the appropriate works for the analysis of the emergence of Sunnī Islam. While I have shown in the fourth chapter that the critical opinions of Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal were among the most highly esteemed of their era, Ibn Sa'd's opinions do not seem to have been particularly important until, perhaps, the time of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.² Even though I justified the inclusion of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* on the basis of the large number of both qualitative and quantitative opinions it contains, one nagging uncertainty remained: did any of these three scholars consider himself to be Sunnī? In fact, there does not appear to be much evidence that the term "Sunnī" was much in use during the time to which I am dating its origins, and we saw that the term *ṣaḥīb sunna* occurred very infrequently in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, and never in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*. How could I claim to be describing the nature of the emergence of Sunnī Islam when the precise self-identities of its first adherents are so opaque?

My solution to this problem has been to approach Sunnism not as a creed articulated by an individual, but, rather, as a *textual tradition* based upon three fundamental principles, each of which I analyzed in Part II of this book. The first of these principles is the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba*, all of whom were authorities for the purpose of *ḥadīth* transmission, regardless of their relationship to the acrimonious conflicts that emerged immediately following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. The second principle is a methodology, the precise nature of which remains somewhat mysterious, for *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, and a consensus as to the identities of the most authoritative transmitters of religious material during the first two centuries

² A perusal of *Tārīkh Baghdad* suggests that al-Khaṭīb drew copiously upon Ibn Sa'd's opinions found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

of Islam. I demonstrated the existence of this consensus in chapter seven, where I found a rate of 87% agreement regarding the reliability of the transmitters whom Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in graded, and 86% for those whom Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ḥanbal graded. The final, and perhaps most subtle, principle guiding the *ḥadīth* scholars who compiled the most important Sunnī books is a historical vision as to the five-generation development of their craft. I articulated this narrative on the basis of a close analysis of the major *ṣaḥābī* and *tābi'ī* transmitters in the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, the most prolific transmitters identified in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, and the individuals who cultivated circles of disciples (*aṣḥāb*) according to Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal. This vision, which has hitherto been ignored or even obfuscated by most modern scholars, is perhaps the most eloquent expression of the network of authoritative scholars whose transmissions inspired the compilers of the third/ninth century to travel thousands of miles in order to acquire and include in their *ḥadīth* books.

The biggest risk that I took in this project was the conscious decision to postpone a detailed analysis of any major *ḥadīth* book of the third/ninth century until after an investigation of the critical prosopographical literature of the same period. The reason for this procedure lay largely in the *esoteric* nature of the *isnād*, namely the hidden story behind the men who transmitted each *ḥadīth*. How much material did each name in the *isnād* transmit? Was a transmitter a prominent pupil of the source from which he obtained the report? Was he a semi-reliable, excellent, or mediocre transmitter? While these questions are occasionally answered in the commentaries of major *ḥadīth* books, the reader, more often than not, must perform the "background check" of the transmitters himself. This book then, should be seen as a necessary preliminary step in order to acquire some of the prosopographical knowledge that the compilers of the great *ḥadīth* books had in their memories and felt little obligation to include in their works. In other words, I have identified the men whom I believe were considered the most reliable *ḥadīth* scholars in the Sunnī tradition from the time of its origins until the third/ninth century and whose presence in an *isnād* enhanced greatly the value of the *ḥadīth* to which it was attached.

Several exciting avenues of research in the Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature have become apparent during the course of this project. An analysis of the roles of the *ṣaḥāba* in *ḥadīth* transmission is an urgent task in

order to reveal their didactic efforts that ultimately played a significant part in the articulation of Islamic law. Another topic of importance is the need to uncover the teachings of the generation of Waki', Yaḥyā l-Qaṭṭān, and 'Affān b. Muslim, whose non-extant writings formed the nuclei of their pupils' books, such as the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba and the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, from which they can be recovered, at least partially, with patience. The century of vigorous *ḥadīth* scholarship from Ibn Abī Ḥatīm to al-Ḥakīm al-Naysābūrī remains another vast uncharted ocean of knowledge, and particular attention must be devoted to the extraordinary Sunnī scholars of Iran during this time. Finally, none of the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books has received a thorough examination in a Western language, a task that I hope this study has made a little less intimidating.

The portrait of Sunnī Islam that I have sketched on the basis of several major books in the genre of *ḥadīth* literature suggests that its articulation and survival was the work of men identified as *ḥuffāz*. The word *ḥāfiẓ* means far more than "one who has memorized the Qur'ān," as is found in colloquial parlance, but, rather, evokes the concepts of "protection," "safeguarding," and "preservation."³ This term has permeated this study, ranging from Ibn Sa'd's citation of Sufyān al-Thawrī's "four *ḥuffāz*,"⁴ to Ibn Ḥanbal's application of the term to at least nine men in the *ʿIlal*,⁵ to the second half of the title of al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* and the bulk of its contents. Although Ibn Sa'd appears personally not to have used the term *ḥāfiẓ*, the entire principle behind *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is the identification of the channels of transmitters who *preserved* the teachings and practices of

³ Various derivatives from the root ḥ-f-z occur in a couple dozen verses in the Qur'ān. The word *ḥāfiẓ* occurs twice (12:64 and 86:4) and refers to God as the "best protector" (*khayrun ḥāfiẓin*) in the first case and an ambiguous guardian in the second. The plural form of *ḥāfiẓ* is associated with those who perform prayers regularly (6:92, 23:9, 70:34; as a verb, see 2:238), those who are chaste ("guard their orifices; see 23:5, 33:35, 70: 29; as a verb see 24:30, 33:35), those who keep their oaths (5:79), and the Prophet Joseph's brothers (12:12, 63, 65). The Qur'ān also declares that God is "protector (*ḥāfiẓ*) over everything" (11:57, 34:21) and that "Lo! We, even we, reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian" (15: 9). Finally, the angels who record all human activity in writing are referred to as *ḥāfiẓūn* (82:10).

⁴ These four men were 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān and Ismā'il b. Abī Khālīd of Kufa; 'Aṣim al-Aḥwal of Basra; and Yaḥyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī of Medina.

⁵ These nine men were 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān, Mālik, Marwān b. Mu'āwiya al-Fazārī, al-Mughīra b. Miqṣam al-Dabbī, Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Waki', Zā'ida b. Qudāma, and Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya.

the Prophet down to his day of critical *ḥadīth* compilation. Ibn Abī Ḥātim defines explicitly the *ṣaḥāba* as the men and women who “preserved (*ḥafizū*) from the Prophet that which he informed them concerning God, what he legislated, ruled, judged, entrusted, ordered, forbade, warned against and inculcated”⁶ and that the *tābiʿūn* “preserved from the *ṣaḥāba* that which they had disseminated concerning regulations, practices, and all that we have described the *ṣaḥāba* as having (known).”⁷ While the sobriquet *ḥāfiẓ* became restricted to fewer and fewer *ḥadīth* scholars over the centuries, at least in the eyes of someone like al-Dhahabī, it was an unambiguous stamp of religious authority that was adopted by Sunnī scholars to distinguish the truly exceptional and indispensable men of learning from the thousands of trustworthy transmitters, all of whom played far more modest roles in the seven-century epic of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism. If we venture to describe Shīʿī Islam as essentially a “*firqā* of the Imāms,” it would seem most appropriate to declare Sunnī Islam, at least as understood by the *ḥadīth* scholars, as the “*firqā* of the *ḥuffāẓ*.”

⁶ *fa-ḥafizū ʿanhu* ۞ *mā ballaghahum ʿan Allāhi ʿazza wa jallā, wa mā sanna wa sharaʿa wa ḥakama wa qadā wa nadaba wa amara wa nahā wa ḥazara wa addaba; Taqdima, 7.*

⁷ *fa-ḥafizū ʿan ṣaḥābati rasūli llāhi* ۞ *mā nasharūhu wa baththūhu min al-aḥkāmi wa l-sunani wa l-āthāri wa sāʿiri mā waṣafnā l-ṣaḥāba bihi; Taqdima, 8.*

APPENDIX A

The following table consists of the *ḥadīth* scholars who are mentioned as authorities in only one of the ten sources analyzed in chapter IV.3.

Table A: Other Critics

Period 1 (100–200/718–815)			
Name	Death Date	Location	Source
ʿAmr b. Dīnār	126/744	Mecca	Ibn al-Madīnī
ʿUthman b. ʿĀsim,	127/745	Kufa	Ibn ʿAdī
Abū Ḥaṣīn			
Abū Ishāq al-Sabʿī,	127/745	Kufa	Ibn al-Madīnī
ʿAmr b. ʿAbdullāh			
al-Hamdānī			
Mālik b. Dīnār	131/749	Basra	Ibn ʿAdī
Ayyūb b. Abī Tamīma	131/749	Basra	Ibn ʿAdī
al-Sakhtiyānī			
Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr	132/749	Yamāma	Ibn al-Madīnī
Rabʿa b. Abī ʿAbd	136/753	Medina	Ibn ʿAdī
al-Rahmān al-Raʿy			
Yahyā b. Saʿīd b. Qays	143/760	Medina	Ibn Ḥibbān
al-Anṣārī			
Hishām b. ʿUrwa	146/763	Medina	Ibn Ḥibbān
Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad	150/767	Medina, Baghdad	Ibn al-Madīnī
Maʿmar b. Rāshid	153/770	Basra, Yemen	Ibn al-Madīnī
Saʿīd b. Abī ʿArūba	156/773	Basra	Ibn al-Madīnī
Mihrān			
Ibrāhīm b. Ṭahmān	168/784	Nishapur	al-Ḥākim
al-Zāhid			
Abū ʿAwāna al-Waḍḍāḥ	176/792	Basra	Ibn al-Madīnī
b. Khālīd			
Yahyā b. Zakariyyā b.	182/799	Kufa	Ibn al-Madīnī
Abī Zāʿida			
Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī,	185/801	Syria	Ibn Abī Ḥātim
Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad			
Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd	188/804	Rayy	Ibn ʿAdī

(cont.)

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
al-Shaybānī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan	189/805	Baghdad	al-Ḥākim
al-Faḍl b. Mūsā al-Sinānī	192/808	Marw	Ibn 'Adī
Sufyān al-Ra's b. Ziyād	200/815	Basra	Ibn 'Adī
al-Baṣrī			
Yahyā b. Ādam, <i>mawla</i> Banī Umayya	203/818	Kufa	Ibn al-Madīnī
Yazīd b. Hārūn b. Zādhān	206/821	Wāsiṭ	al-Khaṭīb
al-Muzaḥḥar b. Mudrik, Abū Kāmil	207/822	Khurasan, Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Affān b. Muslim	220/835	Basra	al-Khaṭīb
Sa'īd b. Maṣṣūr, Abū 'Uthman	227/842	Khurasan	Ibn 'Adī

Period 2 (200–300/815–912): Other Critics

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad	230/845	Baghdad	al-Mizzī
Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. 'Ar'ara	231/846	Basra, Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
Khalaf b. Sālīm al-Makhzūmī	231/846	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
al-Shadhakūnī, Sulaymān b. Dāwūd	234/848	Basra	Ibn 'Adī
al-Qawārīrī, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar	235/849	Basra, Baghdad	Ibn Ḥibbān
Duḥaym, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm	245/859	Syria	Ibn 'Adī
al-Dārimī, 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān	255/869	Samarqand	Ibn Ḥibbān
al-Duhulī, Muḥammad b. Yahyā	258/872	Nishapur	Ibn Ḥibbān
Muḥammad b. Yahyā al-Harrānī	267/880	Harran	Ibn 'Adī
Ibn Wāra, Muḥammad b. Muslim	270/883	Rayy	Ibn 'Adī
Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Awramā	271/884	Isfahan	Ibn 'Adī
Muḥammad b. 'Awf al-Himṣī	272/885	Syria	Ibn 'Adī

(cont.)

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath	275/888	Baghdad, Basra	Ibn Ḥibbān
Ibn Abī Khaythama, Abū Bakr Aḥmad	279/892	Baghdad	al-Mizzī
al-Tirmidhī, Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad b. 'Īsa	279/892	Khurasan	al-Dhahabī
'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	290/903	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Alī b. Ḥusayn b. Junayd al-Rāzī	291/904	Rayy	Ibn al-Jawzī
Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad	293/906	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
Mūsā b. Hārūn al-Bazzār	294/907	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Ubayd al-'Ijlī al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad	294/907	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Alī b. Sa'īd b. Bashīr	297/910	Rayy, Egypt	Ibn 'Adī
'Ulayk al-Rāzī			
'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Farhādhanī	300/912	Khurasan	Ibn 'Adī
'Abdān al-Ahwāzī, 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad	306/918	Ahwaz	Ibn 'Adī
Zakariyyā b. Yahyā al-Sājī	307/919	Basra	Ibn al-Jawzī
al-Dūlābī, Abū Bishr	310/922	Rayy	al-Dhahabī
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad			
Ibn Khuzayma, Muḥammad b. Ishāq	311/923	Nishapur	al-Dhahabī

Period 3 (300–400/912–1009)

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Ṣadafī	347/958	Egypt	al-Mizzī

APPENDIX B

The following table is my interpretation of Ibn Sa'd's favorite *ḥadīth* transmitters on the basis of the grades they receive in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. See above, VII.2.

Table B: Ibn Sa'd's most reliable transmitters

Name	City	Ṭ	Grades	Reference (TK 2001)
Group A ¹				
1 Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī	Basra	4	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt, jāmi'</i>	IX, 246–50
2 al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī	Basra	2	<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn, jāmi', rafti', 'ālī</i>	IX, 157–78
3 Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab	Medina	1	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn, jāmi', rafti', 'ālī</i>	VII, 119–43
Group B ²				
1 'Affān b. Muslim	Basra	7	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt</i>	IX, 300
2 Bakr b. 'Abdullāh al-Muzanī	Basra	2	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	IX, 208
3 Ḥabbān b. Hilāl al-Bāhili	Basra	7	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt</i>	IX, 300
4 Ḥammād b. Zayd	Basra	6	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt</i>	IX, 287
5 Hishām al-Dastawā'ī	Basra	5	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt</i>	IX, 279
6 Hishām b. 'Urwa	Medina	4	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt</i>	VII, 462
7 Mālik b. Anas	Medina	6	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	VII, 570–5
8 Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj	Basra	5	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	IX, 280
9 Sufyān al-Thawrī	Kufa	6	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 492
10 Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī	Medina	5	<i>thiqa-hujja-thabt</i>	VII, 517–8

Table B (cont.)

Name	City	Ṭ	Grades	Reference (TK 2001)
Group C ³				
1 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān al-Fazārī	Kufa	4	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 469
2 'Abdullāh b. Idrīs	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 511
3 Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 523
4 al-Awzā'ī	Syria		<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn</i>	IX, 494
5 Ḥafs b. Ghiyāth	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 512
6 Ibn al-Mubārak	Khurāsān		<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn</i>	IX, 529
7 Ma'n b. 'Isā	Medina	7	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VII, 615
8 Qatāda b. Di'āma	Basra	3	<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn</i>	IX, 228
9 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr	Medina	2	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn, 'āliyy</i>	VII, 177
10 Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn, rafti'</i>	VIII, 517
11 Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān	Basra	6	<i>thiqa-hujja-ma'mūn, rafti'</i>	IX, 294
12 Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya	Kufa	6	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 497
Group D ⁴				
1 'Abdullāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd	Medina	1	<i>thiqa, rafti'</i>	VII, 62
2 Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith	Medina	2	<i>thiqa, 'ālī</i>	VII, 205
3 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī	Medina	2	<i>thiqa-ma'mūn, rafti', 'ālī</i>	VII, 209–19
4 al-Ḥakam b. 'Uṭayba	Kufa	3	<i>thiqa, 'ālī</i>	VIII, 450
5 Maṣṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir	Kufa	4	<i>thiqa-ma'mūn, rafti', 'ālī</i>	VIII, 456
6 Muḥammad b. Sīrīn	Basra	2	<i>thiqa-ma'mūn, rafti', 'ālī</i>	IX, 192–205
7 al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad	Medina	2	<i>thiqa, rafti', 'ālī</i>	VII, 186
8 Sulaymān b. Yasār	Medina	1	<i>thiqa, rafti', 'ālī</i>	VII, 172
9 al-Zuhri	Medina	4	<i>thiqa, jāmi'</i>	VII, 429

¹ Men whose grades were at least *thiqa-hujja* and *jāmi'* or *thiqa-thabt* and *jāmi'*.

² Men whose grades were at least *thiqa-hujja-thabt*.

³ Men whose grades were at least *thiqa-hujja* or *thiqa-thabt*.

⁴ Men whose grades were at least *thiqa, rafti'* or *thiqa, 'ālī*, or *thiqa, jāmi'*.

APPENDIX C

Note: See above, Table 7.1, for a guide to the abbreviations.

Table C: Ibn Ma'īn's liars and other disgraceful transmitters

Name	City	Grade	Reference (al-Dūrī, <i>Tārīkh</i>)
1 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Maṣṣūr	Wāsiṭ	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LHBS	II, 293, 315
2 'Abd al-Mālik b. Hārūn	(Kufa)	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 234, 257
3 Abū Idām Sulaymān ¹	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 346, II, 18
4 Abū l-Bakhtarī, Wahb b. Wahb	Baghdad	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , <i>yaḍa'u l-ḥadīth</i>	I, 129–30, 137, 401
5 Abū Bakr al-Hudhalī	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , ² LBS, LBT	II, 69, 186
6 Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. 'Amr al-Nakha'ī	Baghdad	<i>raḡul sū'</i> , <i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , <i>yaḍa'u l-ḥadīth</i> , <i>akdhab al-nās</i> ³	I, 401, II, 306
7 Abū Jābir al-Bayyādī ⁴	Medina	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 141
8 Abū l-Jārūd Ziyād b. Mundhir ⁵	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , LBT	I, 269, 333, 405
9 Abū Hamdān ⁶	Hīt	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 339
10 Abū Sa'd al-Ṣaghghānī		<i>shayṭān min</i> <i>al-shayāṭīn</i> , LBS	II, 278
11 Abū Sufyān b. al-Ṣawwāf	Basra	<i>yakdhīb</i>	II, 116
12 Abū l-Ṭayyib	Baghdad	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	II, 300
13 'Amr b. Jumay ⁷	Baghdad ⁷	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , LBT	I, 337; II, 308

¹ The father's name is either Zayd or Yazīd according to al-Dhahabī; *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, II, 208.

² This is actually the opinion of Ghundar, at whose mosque Abū Bakr al-Hudhalī was a regular worshipper.

³ Ibn Ma'īn remarked that "nobody in Baghdad could be worse than Abū Dāwūd" *wa lam yakun bi-Baghdād raḡulun illā wa huwa khayrun min Abī Dāwūd*; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 401.

⁴ His name is Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān.

⁵ This is the founder of the Jārūdiyya sect of the Zaydiyya that we mentioned briefly in the previous chapter. Al-Dhahabī mentions that al-Tirmidhī included one of his *ḥadīth* in his *Jāmi'*; *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, II, 93–4.

⁶ Al-Dhahabī provides his name as al-Qāsim b. Bahrām; *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, III, 369 and IV, 583.

⁷ 'Amr was a companion of al-A'mash and served later as *qādī* for Hūlwān

Table C (cont.)

Name	City	Grade	Reference (al-Dūrī, <i>Tārīkh</i>)
14 'Amr b. Khālīd	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 232, 327; II, 270
15 'Aṭā' b. 'Ajlān	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT, LHBS	I, 296, 403
16 Ayyūb b. Mudrik	Damascus	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT, LBS	II, 69, 258
17 Busr b. Abī Arṭāt ⁸	(Syria)	<i>raḡul sū'</i>	I, 112; II, 345
18 Dāwūd b. 'Abd al-Jabbār	(Baghdad)	<i>yakdhīb</i> , LBT	I, 57; II, 295
19 Faḍl b. 'Isā al-Raḡāshī		<i>raḡul sū'</i>	II, 206
20 Ghiyāth b. Ibrāhīm	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 340
21 Ḥasan al-Lu'lu'ī		<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 267
22 al-Haytham b. 'Adī	Kufa	<i>yakdhīb</i> , LBT	I, 267
23 al-Ḥusayn b. Ḍumayra ⁹	Medina	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	I, 174
24 al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ulwān		<i>kadhdhāb</i> II, 294	
25 Ibn Zabāla, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan	Medina	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT, <i>yasruq al-ḥadīth</i>	I, 133, 167
26 Ibrāhīm b. Abī Yaḥyā		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 120, 123
27 Ishāq b. Idrīs	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS, <i>yaḍa'u l-ḥadīth</i>	II, 196, 260
28 Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS, <i>lā yuktabu</i> <i>ḥadīthuhu</i> <i>kadhdhāb</i> ¹⁰	I, 210, 216, 268
29 Khuṣayb b. Jaḥdar		<i>kadhdhāb</i>	II, 76
30 Mahdī b. Hilāl	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	II, 99
31 Mu'allā b. Hilāl	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	I, 270, II, 200
32 al-Mughīra b. Sa'īd ¹¹	Kufa	<i>raḡul sū'</i>	I, 374
33 Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Abī Yazīd	Kufa	<i>yakdhību</i> , LBT	I, 256, 273
34 Muḥammad b. Mujrīb	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , 'aduwu <i>Allāh</i>	II, 238, 306
35 Muḥammad b. 'Uthaym	(Kufa)	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	II, 152, 217

⁸ This is the same Busr whose destructive raid on behalf of Mu'āwiya during the first *fitna* was described above. Ibn Ma'īn reports that the Medinans did not consider him to have heard anything from the Prophet, whereas the Syrians claimed that he did; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 112.

⁹ Ibn Abī Ḥatīm reports that his full name is al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abdullāh b. Ḍumayra b. Abī Ḍumayra; *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, III, 57–8.

¹⁰ This is the expression used by Yaḥyā al-Qaṭṭān, according to Ibn Ma'īn.

¹¹ Founder of the extremist Shī'ī sect known as the Mughīriyya, who led a revolt in Kufa in 119/737. Madelung reports that al-Mughīra was a follower of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, until the latter's death, and then preached that the Mahdī was Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyyā. Note, however, that al-Mughīra was executed twenty-five years prior to the latter's revolt; see Madelung, "al-Mughīriyya," *EP*, VII, 347–8.

Table C (cont.)

Name	City	Grade	Reference (al-Dūrī, <i>Tārīkh</i>)
36 Muḥammad b. Ziyād al-Maymūnī	Kufa, Baghdad ¹²	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i>	II, 302
37 Mūsā b. Muṭayr		<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 245
38 Nūḥ b. Darrāj		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS, LBT	1338, I, 267, II, 25
39 al-Qāsim b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān		<i>laysa yusāwī</i> <i>shay'a</i>	I, 273
40 Qaṭan b. Su'ayr b. al-Khims	Wāsiṭ Khulḍ (?) Baghdad (Basra) Baghdad Kufa Basra	<i>rajul su', kāna yuttahamu bi-amr qabīh</i>	II, 19
41 Šila b. Sulaymān		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	II, 112, 297
42 Šabīḥ b. Sa'īd		<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i>	II, 161, 302
43 Talīd b. Sulaymān		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	I, 209, 394
44 'Ubayd b. al-Qāsim		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 294, II, 305
45 Umayr b. Ishāq		<i>lā yusāwī shay'an</i>	II, 195
46 Usayd al-Jammāl		<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 288
47 Yūnus b. Khabbāb		<i>rajul su'</i>	I, 299, 342
48 Yūsuf b. Khālīd al-Samī		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , <i>lā yuktabu 'anhu shay'un</i>	I, 150; II, 107

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¹² Nūḥ served as a *qāḍī* in both of these cities; *Mizān al-ītidāl*, IV, 276.

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Abbreviations: 'AA: 'Abdullāh; 'AR: 'Abd al-Raḥmān; M: Muḥammad

Note on death dates: Space and time have conspired against the undertaking of an exhaustive study of the death dates of those scholars for whom multiple opinions are found in the sources. In general, I have followed the opinions of al-Dhahabī or Ibn Ḥajar, and have made every effort to be consistent throughout this book.

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CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This study began with the hypothesis that the major *ḥadīth* scholars of the third/ninth century played a far greater role in the articulation of Sunnī Islam than did al-Shāfiʿī and Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, two men traditionally associated with the crystallization of Sunnism. One of the primary reasons for my focus upon the *ḥadīth* scholars of this period is the historical fact that the *Ṣaḥīḥs* of al-Bukhārī and Muslim have remained the most exalted books, after the Qurʾān, in the opinions of virtually all Sunnī scholars of the past twelve centuries, a feat unmatched by any legal or theological work found in the four primary schools of law or the three schools of theology associated with Sunnism.¹ How did these two books achieve this status? In order to answer this question, it was necessary to examine initially three related topics: 1) the long-term evolution of Sunnī *ḥadīth* scholarship; 2) the rise of both *ḥadīth* and *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism during the three generations prior to al-Bukhārī and Muslim; and 3) the state of *ḥadīth* scholarship on the eve of these two compilers, which I have dubbed the generation of Ibn Saʿd, Ibn Maʿīn, and Ibn Ḥanbal.

A narrative of the evolution of *ḥadīth* scholarship over its seven most vibrant centuries was the task of the second and third chapters, the aim of which was to provide a historical context for the most influential *ḥadīth* scholars and books in the Sunnī tradition. I relied heavily upon al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* for the seven-phase narrative of this tradition, and paid particular attention to the men whom he identified with the sobriquet Shaykh al-Islām. Few scholars, if any, in Islamic civilization have devoted such an enormous amount of time and paper to the elucidation of the development of Sunnī *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism as al-Dhahabī, and I endeavored to make my presentation as faithful as possible to his critical eye. Two particularly important findings in these chapters were the dating of

¹ The three Sunnī schools of theology are the Ashʿarī, Mātūrīdī, and that of the *ḥadīth* folk, which, for lack of a better expression, is the one that opposes staunchly rational speculation on theological topics.

the first *ḥadīth* compilations to a full century prior to the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* and, secondly, the surprisingly high volume of compilation and criticism that occurred during the century *after* their production. This latter observation indicates that there was much material that fourth/tenth century scholars felt needed to be preserved that had not been included in the books of al-Bukhārī and his contemporaries, and that the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* represented a high watermark in the evolution of *ḥadīth* scholarship, but were not the culmination of this ubiquitous Sunnī tradition. It was also clear that a closer investigation of the sources composed during the generation of scholars who lived prior to al-Bukhārī and Muslim, as opposed to the Mamlūk days of al-Dhahabī, would be necessary to uncover exactly how this high watermark was reached, as well as to ascertain the fundamental assumptions upon which these books were built.

We inched closer to our goal of identifying the process by which Sunnism was articulated with an investigation of the origins of *ḥadīth* criticism in the fourth chapter. I reasoned that if my hypothesis that *ḥadīth* scholars played the major role in the shaping of Sunnī Islam was correct, then the critical disciplines constructed by the most prominent of these scholars must have exerted a major influence upon the nature of the core sources that were compiled according to their guidelines. The primary challenge was to isolate the earliest and most important designers of this craft, and to distinguish between the mere *ḥadīth* critics, such as Sufyān al-Thawrī, and the more specialized *ḥadīth*-transmitter critics, like Shu'ba, Mālik, and Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān. A particularly significant finding was that *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism was not applied on a vast scale until the generation immediately preceding al-Bukhārī and Muslim, which just so happened to be the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, the first group of critics whose opinions have been well preserved.

A thorough investigation of the nature of *ḥadīth* scholarship and its relationship to *literateurs*, theologians, ascetics, and jurists of the generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal, was necessary due to the importance of these men upon the development of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism. Al-Dhahabī's *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* provided a spectacular bird's eye view of the intellectual and religious life of the central lands of Islam during the first half of the third/ninth century, and depicted the preeminence of Iraqi scholars, along with the shift of the *ḥadīth* centers east to Khurāsān and even central Asia, from where all six of the canonical compilers emerged. The

florescence of book production was evident during this time, and my decision to label this period as the "generation of Ibn Sa'd, Ibn Ma'in, and Ibn Ḥanbal" was due to both the influence of these scholars in general upon *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism, as well as the accessibility of their opinions, which I subjected to rigorous analysis in Part II of this book.

One of the key assumptions that I have made in this study has been that the primary books that I investigated in Part II, namely Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*, the *ʿIlal* of ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad, and Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, are the appropriate works for the analysis of the emergence of Sunnī Islam. While I have shown in the fourth chapter that the critical opinions of Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Ḥanbal were among the most highly esteemed of their era, Ibn Sa'd's opinions do not seem to have been particularly important until, perhaps, the time of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.² Even though I justified the inclusion of *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* on the basis of the large number of both qualitative and quantitative opinions it contains, one nagging uncertainty remained: did any of these three scholars consider himself to be Sunnī? In fact, there does not appear to be much evidence that the term "Sunnī" was much in use during the time to which I am dating its origins, and we saw that the term *ṣaḥīb sunna* occurred very infrequently in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, and never in al-Dūrī's *Tārīkh*. How could I claim to be describing the nature of the emergence of Sunnī Islam when the precise self-identities of its first adherents are so opaque?

My solution to this problem has been to approach Sunnism not as a creed articulated by an individual, but, rather, as a *textual tradition* based upon three fundamental principles, each of which I analyzed in Part II of this book. The first of these principles is the collective probity of the *ṣaḥāba*, all of whom were authorities for the purpose of *ḥadīth* transmission, regardless of their relationship to the acrimonious conflicts that emerged immediately following the death of the Prophet Muḥammad. The second principle is a methodology, the precise nature of which remains somewhat mysterious, for *ḥadīth*-transmitter criticism, and a consensus as to the identities of the most authoritative transmitters of religious material during the first two centuries

² A perusal of *Tārīkh Baghdad* suggests that al-Khaṭīb drew copiously upon Ibn Sa'd's opinions found in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.

of Islam. I demonstrated the existence of this consensus in chapter seven, where I found a rate of 87% agreement regarding the reliability of the transmitters whom Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Ma'in graded, and 86% for those whom Ibn Sa'd and Ibn Hanbal graded. The final, and perhaps most subtle, principle guiding the *ḥadīth* scholars who compiled the most important Sunnī books is a historical vision as to the five-generation development of their craft. I articulated this narrative on the basis of a close analysis of the major *ṣaḥābī* and *tābi'ī* transmitters in the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal, the most prolific transmitters identified in Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, and the individuals who cultivated circles of disciples (*aṣḥāb*) according to Ibn Ma'in and Ibn Hanbal. This vision, which has hitherto been ignored or even obfuscated by most modern scholars, is perhaps the most eloquent expression of the network of authoritative scholars whose transmissions inspired the compilers of the third/ninth century to travel thousands of miles in order to acquire and include in their *ḥadīth* books.

The biggest risk that I took in this project was the conscious decision to postpone a detailed analysis of any major *ḥadīth* book of the third/ninth century until after an investigation of the critical prosopographical literature of the same period. The reason for this procedure lay largely in the *esoteric* nature of the *isnād*, namely the hidden story behind the men who transmitted each *ḥadīth*. How much material did each name in the *isnād* transmit? Was a transmitter a prominent pupil of the source from which he obtained the report? Was he a semi-reliable, excellent, or mediocre transmitter? While these questions are occasionally answered in the commentaries of major *ḥadīth* books, the reader, more often than not, must perform the "background check" of the transmitters himself. This book then, should be seen as a necessary preliminary step in order to acquire some of the prosopographical knowledge that the compilers of the great *ḥadīth* books had in their memories and felt little obligation to include in their works. In other words, I have identified the men whom I believe were considered the most reliable *ḥadīth* scholars in the Sunnī tradition from the time of its origins until the third/ninth century and whose presence in an *isnād* enhanced greatly the value of the *ḥadīth* to which it was attached.

Several exciting avenues of research in the Sunnī *ḥadīth* literature have become apparent during the course of this project. An analysis of the roles of the *ṣaḥāba* in *ḥadīth* transmission is an urgent task in

order to reveal their didactic efforts that ultimately played a significant part in the articulation of Islamic law. Another topic of importance is the need to uncover the teachings of the generation of Waki', Yahyā l-Qaṭṭān, and 'Affān b. Muslim, whose non-extant writings formed the nuclei of their pupils' books, such as the *Muṣannaf* of Ibn Abī Shayba and the *Musnad* of Ibn Hanbal, from which they can be recovered, at least partially, with patience. The century of vigorous *ḥadīth* scholarship from Ibn Abī Hātim to al-Ḥakīm al-Naysābūrī remains another vast uncharted ocean of knowledge, and particular attention must be devoted to the extraordinary Sunnī scholars of Iran during this time. Finally, none of the six canonical Sunnī *ḥadīth* books has received a thorough examination in a Western language, a task that I hope this study has made a little less intimidating.

The portrait of Sunnī Islam that I have sketched on the basis of several major books in the genre of *ḥadīth* literature suggests that its articulation and survival was the work of men identified as *ḥuffāz*. The word *ḥāfiẓ* means far more than "one who has memorized the Qur'ān," as is found in colloquial parlance, but, rather, evokes the concepts of "protection," "safeguarding," and "preservation."³ This term has permeated this study, ranging from Ibn Sa'd's citation of Sufyān al-Thawrī's "four *ḥuffāz*,"⁴ to Ibn Hanbal's application of the term to at least nine men in the *ʿIlal*,⁵ to the second half of the title of al-Dhahabī's *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz* and the bulk of its contents. Although Ibn Sa'd appears personally not to have used the term *ḥāfiẓ*, the entire principle behind *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* is the identification of the channels of transmitters who *preserved* the teachings and practices of

³ Various derivatives from the root ḥ-f-ẓ occur in a couple dozen verses in the Qur'ān. The word *ḥāfiẓ* occurs twice (12:64 and 86:4) and refers to God as the "best protector" (*khayrun ḥāfiẓin*) in the first case and an ambiguous guardian in the second. The plural form of *ḥāfiẓ* is associated with those who perform prayers regularly (6:92, 23:9, 70:34; as a verb, see 2:238), those who are chaste ("guard their orifices; see 23:5, 33:35, 70:29; as a verb see 24:30, 33:35), those who keep their oaths (5:79), and the Prophet Joseph's brothers (12:12, 63, 65). The Qur'ān also declares that God is "protector (*ḥāfiẓ*) over everything" (11:57, 34:21) and that "Lo! We, even we, reveal the Reminder, and lo! We verily are its Guardian" (15:9). Finally, the angels who record all human activity in writing are referred to as *ḥāfiẓūn* (82:10).

⁴ These four men were 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān and Ismā'īl b. Abī Khālid of Kufa; 'Aṣīm al-Aḥwal of Basra; and Yahyā b. Sa'id al-Anṣārī of Medina.

⁵ These nine men were 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān, Mālik, Marwān b. Mu'āwiya al-Fazārī, al-Mughīra b. Miqṣam al-Ḍabbī, Shu'ba, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Waki', Zā'ida b. Qudāma, and Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya.

the Prophet down to his day of critical *ḥadīth* compilation. Ibn Abī Ḥātim defines explicitly the *ṣaḥāba* as the men and women who “preserved (*ḥafīzū*) from the Prophet that which he informed them concerning God, what he legislated, ruled, judged, entrusted, ordered, forbade, warned against and inculcated”⁶ and that the *tābiʿūn* “preserved from the *ṣaḥāba* that which they had disseminated concerning regulations, practices, and all that we have described the *ṣaḥāba* as having (known).”⁷ While the sobriquet *ḥafīz* became restricted to fewer and fewer *ḥadīth* scholars over the centuries, at least in the eyes of someone like al-Dhahabī, it was an unambiguous stamp of religious authority that was adopted by Sunnī scholars to distinguish the truly exceptional and indispensable men of learning from the thousands of trustworthy transmitters, all of whom played far more modest roles in the seven-century epic of *ḥadīth* compilation and criticism. If we venture to describe Shīʿī Islam as essentially a “*firqā* of the Imāms,” it would seem most appropriate to declare Sunnī Islam, at least as understood by the *ḥadīth* scholars, as the “*firqā* of the *ḥuffāz*.”

⁶ *fa-ḥafīzū ʿanhu* ۞ *mā ballaghahum ʿan Allāhi ʿazza wa jallā, wa mā sanna wa sharaʿa wa ḥakama wa qaḍā wa nadaba wa amara wa nahā wa ḥazara wa addaba; Taqdima, 7.*

⁷ *fa-ḥafīzū ʿan ṣaḥābatī rasūli llāhi* ۞ *mā nasharūhu wa baththūhu min al-aḥkāmi wa l-sunani wa l-āthari wa sāʿiri mā waṣafnā l-ṣaḥāba bihi; Taqdima, 8.*

APPENDIX A

The following table consists of the *ḥadīth* scholars who are mentioned as authorities in only one of the ten sources analyzed in chapter IV.3.

Table A: Other Critics

Period 1 (100–200/718–815)			
Name	Death Date	Location	Source
ʿAmr b. Dīnār	126/744	Mecca	Ibn al-Madīnī
ʿUthman b. ʿĀsim,	127/745	Kufa	Ibn ʿAdī
Abū Ḥaṣīn			
Abū Ishāq al-Sabʿī,	127/745	Kufa	Ibn al-Madīnī
ʿAmr b. ʿAbdullāh			
al-Hamdānī			
Mālik b. Dīnār	131/749	Basra	Ibn ʿAdī
Ayyūb b. Abī Tamīma	131/749	Basra	Ibn ʿAdī
al-Sakhtiyānī			
Yahyā b. Abī Kathīr	132/749	Yamāma	Ibn al-Madīnī
Rabīʿa b. Abī ʿAbd	136/753	Medina	Ibn ʿAdī
al-Raḥmān al-Raʿy			
Yahyā b. Saʿīd b. Qays	143/760	Medina	Ibn Ḥibbān
al-Anṣārī			
Hishām b. ʿUrwa	146/763	Medina	Ibn Ḥibbān
Ibn Ishāq, Muḥammad	150/767	Medina, Baghdad	Ibn al-Madīnī
Maʿmar b. Rāshid	153/770	Basra, Yemen	Ibn al-Madīnī
Saʿīd b. Abī ʿArūba	156/773	Basra	Ibn al-Madīnī
Mihhrān			
Ibrāhīm b. Ṭahmān	168/784	Nishapur	al-Ḥākim
al-Zāhid			
Abū ʿAwāna al-Waḍḍāḥ	176/792	Basra	Ibn al-Madīnī
b. Khālīd			
Yahyā b. Zakariyyā b.	182/799	Kufa	Ibn al-Madīnī
Abī Zāʿida			
Abū Ishāq al-Fazārī,	185/801	Syria	Ibn Abī Ḥātim
Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad			
Jarīr b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd	188/804	Rayy	Ibn ʿAdī

(cont.)

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
al-Shaybānī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan	189/805	Baghdad	al-Ḥākim
al-Faḍl b. Mūsā al-Sinānī	192/808	Marw	Ibn 'Adī
Sufyān al-Ra's b. Ziyād	200/815	Basra	Ibn 'Adī
al-Baṣrī			
Yaḥyā b. Ādam, <i>mawlā</i> Banī Umayya	203/818	Kufa	Ibn al-Madīnī
Yazīd b. Hārūn b. Zādhān	206/821	Wāsiṭ	al-Khaṭīb
al-Muzaḥḥār b. Mudrik, Abū Kāmil	207/822	Khurasan, Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Affān b. Muslim	220/835	Basra	al-Khaṭīb
Sa'īd b. Maṣṣūr, Abū 'Uthman	227/842	Khurasan	Ibn 'Adī

Period 2 (200–300/815–912): Other Critics

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
Ibn Sa'd, Muḥammad	230/845	Baghdad	al-Mizzī
Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. 'Ar'ara	231/846	Basra, Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
Khalaf b. Sālīm al-Makhzūmī	231/846	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
al-Shadhakūnī, Sulaymān b. Dāwūd	234/848	Basra	Ibn 'Adī
al-Qawāriri, 'Ubayd Allāh b. 'Umar	235/849	Basra, Baghdad	Ibn Ḥibbān
Duḥaym, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm	245/859	Syria	Ibn 'Adī
al-Dārimī, 'Abdullāh b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān	255/869	Samarqand	Ibn Ḥibbān
al-Dhuhli, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā	258/872	Nishapur	Ibn Ḥibbān
Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Harrānī	267/880	Harran	Ibn 'Adī
Ibn Wāra, Muḥammad b. Muslim	270/883	Rayy	Ibn 'Adī
Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Awramā	271/884	Isfahan	Ibn 'Adī
Muḥammad b. 'Awf al-Ḥimṣī	272/885	Syria	Ibn 'Adī

(cont.)

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath	275/888	Baghdad, Basra	Ibn Ḥibbān
Ibn Abī Khaythama, Abū Bakr Aḥmad	279/892	Baghdad	al-Mizzī
al-Tirmidhī, Abū 'Īsā Muḥammad b. 'Īsa	279/892	Khurasan	al-Dhahabī
'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal	290/903	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Alī b. Ḥusayn b. Junayd al-Rāzī	291/904	Rayy	Ibn al-Jawzī
Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad	293/906	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
Mūsā b. Hārūn al-Bazzār	294/907	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Ubayd al-'Ijlī al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad	294/907	Baghdad	Ibn 'Adī
'Alī b. Sa'īd b. Bashīr	297/910	Rayy, Egypt	Ibn 'Adī
'Ulayk al-Rāzī			
'Abdullāh b. Muḥammad al-Farhādhanī	300/912	Khurasan	Ibn 'Adī
'Abdān al-Ahwāzī, 'Abdullāh b. Aḥmad	306/918	Ahwaz	Ibn 'Adī
Zakariyyā b. Yaḥyā al-Sājī	307/919	Basra	Ibn al-Jawzī
al-Dūlābī, Abū Bishr	310/922	Rayy	al-Dhahabī
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad			
Ibn Khuzayma, Muḥammad b. Ishāq	311/923	Nishapur	al-Dhahabī

Period 3 (300–400/912–1009)

Name	Death Date	Location	Source
Abū Sa'īd 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Ṣadafī	347/958	Egypt	al-Mizzī

APPENDIX B

The following table is my interpretation of Ibn Sa'd's favorite *ḥadīth* transmitters on the basis of the grades they receive in *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*. See above, VII.2.

Table B: Ibn Sa'd's most reliable transmitters

Name	City	Ṭ	Grades	Reference (ṬK 2001)
Group A ¹				
1 Ayyūb al-Sakḥūyānī	Basra	4	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt, jāmi'</i>	IX, 246–50
2 al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī	Basra	2	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn, jāmi', raft', 'ālī</i>	IX, 157–78
3 Sa'īd b. al-Musayyab	Medina	1	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn, jāmi', raft', 'ālī</i>	VII, 119–43
Group B ²				
1 'Affān b. Muslim	Basra	7	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt</i>	IX, 300
2 Bakr b. 'Abdullāh al-Muzanī	Basra	2	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	IX, 208
3 Ḥabbān b. Hilāl al-Bāhilī	Basra	7	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt</i>	IX, 300
4 Ḥammād b. Zayd	Basra	6	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt</i>	IX, 287
5 Hishām al-Dastawā'ī	Basra	5	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt</i>	IX, 279
6 Hishām b. 'Urwa	Medina	4	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt</i>	VII, 462
7 Mālik b. Anas	Medina	6	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	VII, 570–5
8 Shu'ba b. al-Ḥajjāj	Basra	5	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	IX, 280
9 Sufyān al-Thawrī	Kufa	6	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt, ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 492
10 Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Anṣārī	Medina	5	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-thabt</i>	VII, 517–8

¹ Men whose grades were at least *thiqa-ḥujja* and *jāmi'* or *thiqa-thabt* and *jāmi'*.

² Men whose grades were at least *thiqa-ḥujja-thabt*.

Table B (cont.)

Name	City	Ṭ	Grades	Reference (ṬK 2001)
Group C ³				
1 'Abd al-Malik b. Abī Sulaymān al-Fazārī	Kufa	4	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 469
2 'Abdullāh b. Idrīs	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 511
3 Abū Nu'aym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 523
4 al-Awzā'ī	Syria		<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn</i>	IX, 494
5 Ḥafs b. Ghiyāth	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 512
6 Ibn al-Mubārak	Khurāsān		<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn</i>	IX, 529
7 Ma'n b. 'Isā	Medina	7	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VII, 615
8 Qatāda b. Di'āma	Basra	3	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn</i>	IX, 228
9 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr	Medina	2	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn, 'āliyy</i>	VII, 177
10 Wakī' b. al-Jarrāḥ	Kufa	7	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn, raft'</i>	VIII, 517
11 Yahyā b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭān	Basra	6	<i>thiqa-ḥujja-ma'mūn, raft'</i>	IX, 294
12 Zuhayr b. Mu'āwiya	Kufa	6	<i>thiqa-thabt-ma'mūn</i>	VIII, 497
Group D ⁴				
1 'Abdullāh b. 'Utba b. Mas'ūd	Medina	1	<i>thiqa, raft'</i>	VII, 62
2 Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥārith	Medina	2	<i>thiqa, 'ālī</i>	VII, 205
3 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī	Medina	2	<i>thiqa-ma'mūn, raft', 'ālī</i>	VII, 209–19
4 al-Ḥakam b. 'Utayba	Kufa	3	<i>thiqa, 'ālī</i>	VIII, 450
5 Maṣṣūr b. al-Mu'tamir	Kufa	4	<i>thiqa-ma'mūn, raft', 'ālī</i>	VIII, 456
6 Muḥammad b. Sīrīn	Basra	2	<i>thiqa-ma'mūn, raft', 'ālī</i>	IX, 192–205
7 al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad	Medina	2	<i>thiqa, raft', 'ālī</i>	VII, 186
8 Sulaymān b. Yasār	Medina	1	<i>thiqa, raft', 'ālī</i>	VII, 172
9 al-Zuhri	Medina	4	<i>thiqa, jāmi'</i>	VII, 429

³ Men whose grades were at least *thiqa-ḥujja* or *thiqa-thabt*.

⁴ Men whose grades were at least *thiqa, raft'* or *thiqa, 'ālī*, or *thiqa, jāmi'*.

APPENDIX C

Note: See above, Table 7.1, for a guide to the abbreviations.

Table C: Ibn Ma'in's liars and other disgraceful transmitters

Name	City	Grade	Reference (al-Dūrī, <i>Tārīkh</i>)
1 'Abd al-Ḥakīm b. Maṣṣūr	Wāsiṭ	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LHBS	II, 293, 315
2 'Abd al-Malik b. Hārūn	(Kufa)	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 234, 257
3 Abū Idām Sulaymān ¹	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 346, II, 18
4 Abū l-Bakhtarī, Wahb b. Wahb	Baghdad	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , <i>yaḍa'u l-ḥadīth</i>	I, 129–30, 137, 401
5 Abū Bakr al-Hudhalī	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , ² LBS, LBT	II, 69, 186
6 Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān b. 'Amr al-Nakha'ī	Baghdad	<i>rajul sū'</i> , <i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , <i>yaḍa'u l-ḥadīth</i> , <i>akḥab al-nās</i> ³	I, 401, II, 306
7 Abū Jābir al-Bayyāḍī ⁴	Medina	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 141
8 Abū l-Jārūd Ziyād b. Mundhīr ⁵	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , LBT	I, 269, 333, 405
9 Abū Hamdān ⁶	Hīt	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 339
10 Abū Sa'd al-Ṣaghghānī		<i>shayṭān min</i> <i>al-shayṭān</i> , LBS	II, 278
11 Abū Sufyān b. al-Ṣawwāf	Basra	<i>yakdhīb</i>	II, 116
12 Abū l-Tayyib	Baghdad	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	II, 300
13 'Amr b. Jumay ⁷	Baghdad ⁷	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i> , LBT	I, 337; II, 308

¹ The father's name is either Zayd or Yazīd according to al-Dhahabī; *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, II, 208.

² This is actually the opinion of Ghundar, at whose mosque Abū Bakr al-Hudhalī was a regular worshipper.

³ Ibn Ma'in remarked that "nobody in Baghdad could be worse than Abū Dāwūd" *wa lam yakun bi-Baghdād rajulun illā wa huwa khayrun min Abī Dāwūd*; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 401.

⁴ His name is Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Rahmān.

⁵ This is the founder of the Jārūdiyya sect of the Zaydiyya that we mentioned briefly in the previous chapter. Al-Dhahabī mentions that al-Tirmidhī included one of his *ḥadīth* in his *Jāmi'*; *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, II, 93–4.

⁶ Al-Dhahabī provides his name as al-Qāsim b. Bahrām; *Mizān al-ʿitidāl*, III, 369 and IV, 583.

⁷ 'Amr was a companion of al-A'mash and served later as *qāḍī* for Ḥulwān

Table C (cont.)

Name	City	Grade	Reference (al-Dūrī, <i>Tārīkh</i>)
14 'Amr b. Khālīd	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 232, 327; II, 270
15 'Aṭā' b. 'Ajlān	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT, LHBS	I, 296, 403
16 Ayyūb b. Mudrik	Damascus	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT, LBS	II, 69, 258
17 Busr b. Abī Artāt ⁸	(Syria)	<i>rajul sū'</i>	I, 112; II, 345
18 Dāwūd b. 'Abd al-Jabbār	(Baghdad)	<i>yakdhīb</i> , LBT	I, 57; II, 295
19 Faḍl b. 'Isā al-Raqāshī		<i>rajul sū'</i>	II, 206
20 Ghiyāth b. Ibrāhīm	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 340
21 Ḥasan al-Lu'lu'ī		<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 267
22 al-Haytham b. 'Adī	Kufa	<i>yakdhīb</i> , LBT	I, 267
23 al-Ḥusayn b. Ḍumayra ⁹	Medina	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	I, 174
24 al-Ḥusayn b. 'Ulwān		<i>kadhdhāb</i> II, 294	
25 Ibn Zabāla, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan	Medina	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT, <i>yasruq al-ḥadīth</i>	I, 133, 167
26 Ibrāhīm b. Abī Yahyā		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 120, 123
27 Ishāq b. Idrīs	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS, <i>yaḍa'u l-ḥadīth</i>	II, 196, 260
28 Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS, <i>lā yuktabu</i> <i>ḥadīthuhu</i>	I, 210, 216, 268
29 Khuṣayb b. Jaḥdar		<i>kadhdhāb</i> ¹⁰	II, 76
30 Mahdī b. Hilāl	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	II, 99
31 Mu'allā b. Hilāl	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	I, 270, II, 200
32 al-Mughīra b. Sa'id ¹¹	Kufa	<i>rajul sū'</i>	I, 374
33 Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Abī Yazīd	Kufa	<i>yakdhību</i> , LBT	I, 256, 273
34 Muḥammad b. Mujīb	Kufa	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , 'aduww <i>Allāh</i>	II, 238, 306
35 Muḥammad b. 'Uthaym	(Kufa)	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	II, 152, 217

⁸ This is the same Busr whose destructive raid on behalf of Mu'āwiya during the first *fitna* was described above. Ibn Ma'in reports that the Medinans did not consider him to have heard anything from the Prophet, whereas the Syrians claimed that he did; al-Dūrī, *Tārīkh*, I, 112.

⁹ Ibn Abī Ḥātim reports that his full name is al-Ḥusayn b. 'Abdullāh b. Ḍumayra b. Abī Ḍumayra; *al-Jarḥ wa l-ta'dīl*, III, 57–8.

¹⁰ This is the expression used by Yahyā al-Qaṭṭān, according to Ibn Ma'in.

¹¹ Founder of the extremist Shī'ī sect known as the Mughīriyya, who led a revolt in Kufa in 119/737. Madelung reports that al-Mughīra was a follower of Muḥammad al-Bāqir, until the latter's death, and then preached that the Mahdī was Muḥammad b. 'Abdullāh al-Nafs al-Zakiyyā. Note, however, that al-Mughīra was executed twenty-five years prior to the latter's revolt; see Madelung, "al-Mughīriyya," *ET*, VII, 347–8.

Table C (cont.)

Name	City	Grade	Reference (al-Dūrī, <i>Tārīkh</i>)
36 Muḥammad b. Ziyād al-Maymūnī		<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i>	II, 302
37 Mūsā b. Muṭayr		<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 245
38 Nūḥ b. Darrāj	Kufa, Baghdad ¹²	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS, LBT	1338, I, 267, II, 25
39 al-Qāsim b. 'Abd al-Rahmān		<i>laysa yusāwī</i> <i>shay'a</i>	I, 273
40 Qaṭan b. Su'ayr b. al-Khims		<i>rajul su', kāna</i> <i>yuttahamu bi-amr</i> <i>qabīh</i>	II, 19
41 Šila b. Sulaymān	Wāsiṭ	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	II, 112, 297
42 Šabīḥ b. Sa'īd	Khulḍ (?)	<i>kadhdhāb-khabīth</i>	II, 161, 302
43 Talīd b. Sulaymān	Baghdad	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBS	I, 209, 394
44 'Ubayd b. al-Qāsim		<i>kadhdhāb</i> , LBT	I, 294, II, 305
45 Umayr b. Ishāq	(Basra)	<i>lā yusāwī shay'an</i>	II, 195
46 Usayd al-Jammāl	Baghdad	<i>kadhdhāb</i>	I, 288
47 Yūnus b. Khabbāb	Kufa	<i>rajul sū'</i>	I, 299, 342
48 Yūsuf b. Khālīd al-Samī	Basra	<i>kadhdhāb</i> , <i>lā</i> <i>yuktabu 'anhu</i> <i>shay'un</i>	I, 150; II, 107

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¹² Nūḥ served as a *qāḍī* in both of these cities; *Mizān al-ittidāl*, IV, 276.

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Abbreviations: 'AA: 'Abdullāh; 'AR: 'Abd al-Raḥmān; M: Muḥammad

Note on death dates: Space and time have conspired against the undertaking of an exhaustive study of the death dates of those scholars for whom multiple opinions are found in the sources. In general, I have followed the opinions of al-Dhahabī or Ibn Ḥajar, and have made every effort to be consistent throughout this book.

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